# Vietnam Courier

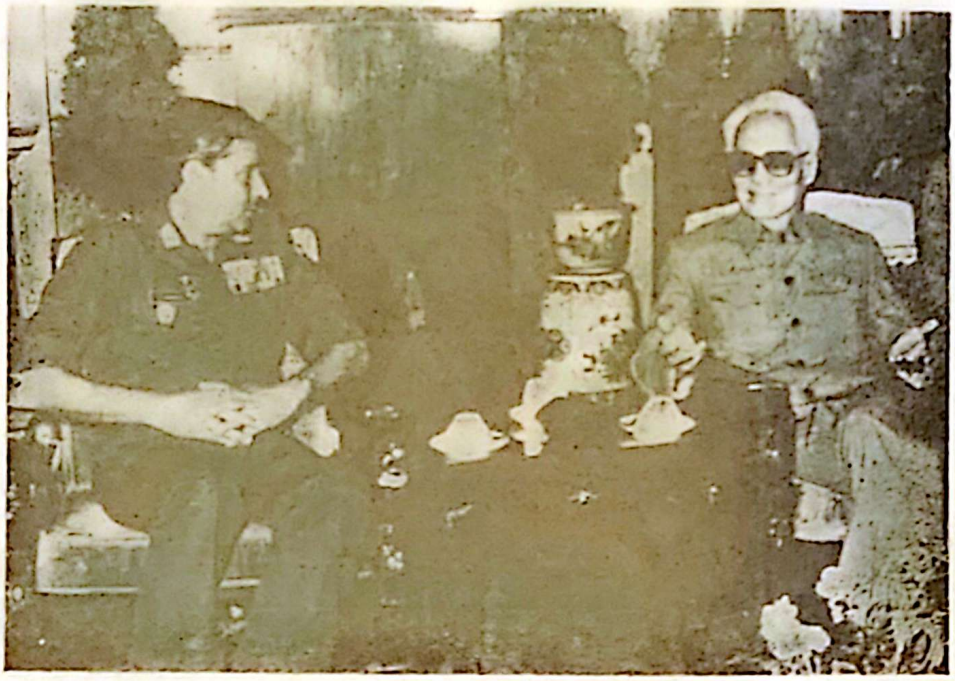
A MONTHLY REVIEW No. 6 – 1987

- An Interview with Soviet Foreign Minister E. A. Shevardnadze
- Four Urgent Tasks of Ho Chi Minh City
- The Quality of Export Goods
- Tay Nguyen on the Path to Socialism
- The Thuong Funeral House

THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS AND SOCIALISM

# DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES

● *Nguyen Van Linh, General Secretary of the CPV CC, receiving Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, Chairman of Angola's MPLA - Workers' Party, President of the People's Republic of Angola, and Chairman of the Angolan National Assembly. (6 April 1987).*



● *Pham Van Dong, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, receiving K. Sundarj, Chief-of-Staff of the Indian Army. (2 April 1987)*

● *Pham Van Dong, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, receiving François Missoffe, Advisor to the French Prime Minister. (6 April 1987)*

*Photos :* VNA

## THE LITERARY AWARDS FOR 1985 BOOKS

Early this year, the awards for 1985 literary publications were announced by the Vietnam Writers' Association.

Those works had been exposed to general appreciation for a year. The first prize was given to Dang Thai Mai's *"Autobiography"* and the second prize to Ma Van Khang's *"The Season of Fallen Leaves"*. The main prize for poetry went to poetess Y Nhi's collection *"A Woman Sits Knitting"*.

Dang Thai Mai had been working on his autobiography for years and had completed it just before his death in 1984 at the age of 82. He writes in his book: "I only wish to present truthfully the factors that helped to shape my character, my thoughts and my perception of life."

His scholarly pen describes and explains his states of mind, the stages of his social awareness, typical episodes, historical and social events in a pure, brilliant and at the same time measured style.

In *"The Season of Fallen Leaves"* Ma Van Khang tackles some pressing social problems as reflected in a Hanoi family which is being affected by drastic socio-economic changes. With a coherent plot and true-to-life characters the author proposes tentative solutions to social and ethical problems. That is one factor accounting for the readers' warm reception.

*"A Woman Sits Knitting"* is full of reflection on life, happiness and human relations presented with passion and sincerity. Y Nhi started writing poetry in 1967 when she was a literature student at Hanoi University. She holds that modern poetry must reflect the great changes happening in the country and in the lives of individual men and women, describe the lights and shades, and help uplift people's minds and souls.

THANG TAM

## THE 1987 NATIONAL TABLE-TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Early in March, there took place in Hanoi one of the major sporting events of the year: the fifth national table-tennis championships for the prize offered by the daily *Nhan Dan*. The finals were disputed in the Hanoi City Gymnasium.

The tournament lasted from 7 to 15 March 1987 with the participation of 152 contestants from 20 provinces and cities and 4 departments, including 24 masters-of-sports and 48 grade-1 players. Participants under 17 accounted for over 50 per cent. The youngest was Doan Tuan Anh, 12, of Hanoi. He was also one of the best players. For the first time taking part in a national contest, he entered the 16th round of the men's single, and only lost with the close score of 2-3 to a master-of-sports. He was awarded the "Outstanding Young Player" prize.

In previous tournaments contestants were merely chosen by provinces, cities or services. This led to players' abilities being quite unequal. For this prize, only players with outstanding records directly went to the finals, the others had to pass through trial heats in January and February 1987. The quality of play was visibly heightened. All matches were hard fought. There were many surprises. Some high-class players who had won prizes last year such as Nguyen Bich Ngoc (second prize in the women's singles), Nguyen Minh Hien, Tran Tuan Anh, Nguyen Dinh Phien (first, second and third, respectively, in the men's singles) failed to win top ranks this year.

The most successful team was that of the army. It was awarded four out of seven gold medals. Its members won the men's and women's team championships, the men's doubles and the women's singles championship (the men's team championship for the third time running and the women's team championship for the first). Besides, it was awarded 2 silvers and 2 bronzes.

The Hanoi team, despite the absence of two outstanding players, Nguyen Thi Mai and Nguyen Ngoc Phan, former national champions, played quite well. Its young players entered the finals in the men's and women's team, the women's doubles and the mixed doubles events, but regrettably failed to carry the day due to lack of experience.

So far, the Ho Chi Minh City team has been regarded as one of the strongest. This time, however, it only won a gold and a bronze. The team's 14-year-old Nhan Vi Quan proved herself a very promising player. She was awarded the third prize in the women's singles, and together with Ton Thanh Hang, 15, gained the women's doubles championship. They are the youngest women's doubles champions of Vietnam.

The teams of the People's Security Forces and Hai Hung province showed great progress. The gold medals they won demonstrated the nation-wide development of this game. In previous tournaments, all the golds had gone to the teams of the Army, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (except for the 1986 men's singles won by the Cuu Long team). Apart from a gold in the mixed doubles, the People's Security Forces team won a silver and 2 bronzes. Nguyen Duc Long, 32, of Hai Hung, won the men's singles.

At present, table-tennis, football, and shooting are three sports showing vigorous development in Vietnam. A great deal of attention has been paid to them by the Sports and Physical Culture Department. A national table-tennis team will be selected. Intensive training and regular contests will help it progress toward world's standards.

NGUYEN HONG SON

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The preparatory work for this issue was completed on 15 April 1987.

*Front Cover:* Elephant-hunters in Don village, Dac Lac province.
*Photo:* VAN THANH


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# COPYRIGHT PROTECTION IN VIETNAM

In March 1987 a Council of Ministers' Decree on the protection of copyright was issued in Hanoi. At the same time the Vietnam Copyright Agency (VINAAUTEURS) was founded.

The Decree spells out the criteria for recognition of authorship of literary, cultural and scientific works. An author enjoys copyright only for those of his works which help promote socialist construction and defence, and improve the people's life.

The Decree also defines the conditions for payment of fees to an author for his works, and the duration of copyright and the settlement of litigation. The Decree also deals with copyright relating to Vietnamese works published abroad and foreign works published in Vietnam for the first time. It states that a Vietnamese citizen working or studying in a foreign country, whose work about Vietnam or other subjects has been used in that country, shall enjoy copyright. A Vietnamese work, written at the request of a foreign publisher and used by the latter, enjoys copyright protection but only after being examined and approved by competent Vietnamese authorities.

A foreigner working or studying in Vietnam, whose work is first published in Vietnam, shall enjoy copyright like a Vietnamese author.

Vietnam having not yet joined the International Copyright Agreement, the Decree states that the use of foreign publications by Vietnamese organizations and of Vietnamese publications in foreign countries does not fall under its provisions.

In late 1986 the Vietnam Copyright Protection Agency was set up under the Ministry of Culture. Its offices are on Ngo Quyen Street, Hanoi. It helps enforce the provisions of the Decree: receiving and settling payments to an author and his heirs for his works used in Vietnam; receiving and settling payments to a foreign or Vietnamese author whose work is published for the first time in Vietnam or overseas respectively.

VINAAUTEURS together with other cultural branches at all levels will cooperate in copyright protection. It will select Vietnamese works for publication abroad, ensure registration of authors and works, and will set up a network of collaborators and branches in the provinces. Besides, together with other departments, it will help settle copyright disputes.

VU QUOC HUNG

## ONE MORE ANCIENT BRONZE DRUM UNEARTHED

A bronze drum was unearthed early this year by farmers in Que Tan commune, Que Vo district, Ha Bac province, while digging an irrigation canal.

The drum was found lying upside down half a metre below ground. It was in a damaged state: only the head and side were relatively intact.

At the centre of the top is a 12-pointed star in relief surrounded by five concentric rings 0.5 centimetre apart. The principal rings, the third and fourth, are adorned with figures of dancers wearing disguise and two pairs of birds with long bills and tails flying in single file counterclockwise. Each pair is separated by lozenge-shaped designs resembling canoes. Near the rim are three cast toads facing counterclockwise, and traces of a fourth, which has been lost.

Basing themselves on the size, shape and decorative designs of the drum, archaeologists relate it to those found earlier at Phu Duy, Ngoc Lu and Binh Da. They belong to the most beautiful of drums found so far in Vietnam. According to initial estimates, they date back nearly 3,000 years ago.

KIEN AN

## SHRIMP-FARMING: A THRIVING BUSINESS

Vietnam has more than 250,000 ha of fresh, salt and brackish water bodies suited for shrimp farming.

Over the past years this trade has strongly developed in many places. In the Mekong delta, people raise prawns for export in tidal swamps, canals and submerged forests, with good results and over an expanding area. In the Northern coastal provinces the movement has developed thanks to State investment in capital, manpower and production means. The Central provinces, from Phu Khanh to Binh Tri Thien, which have bays and lagoons teeming with lobsters, have made big investments and carried out economic association between production and trading units, and between whole districts and freezing plants.

Proper technique popularized by schools, institutes, companies and enterprises has brought about good results and stabilized output. Output in Hau Giang province has risen from 0.5 tonne to 1.2 tonnes per hectare. Duyen Hai district (Cuu Long province) has 6 State farms and 67 production collectives raising shrimps for export. In particular the associated collectives in Nam Can, Ngoc Hien district, Minh Hai province, have put a new face on the locality after 3 years (1984 — 1986) of activity in fishing, aquiculture, and processing industry by five fishing villages and a processing centre. The value of exported aquatic products rose from 2.8 million dollars in 1983 to 5.3 million in 1986. This has fed the district and provincial budgets and made possible increased investment for enlarged reproduction.

Many families in Nam Bo have dug ponds in their gardens, produced feed and selected shrimp strains. Weirs are made to attract shrimps, rational feeding schedules worked out, and efforts made to raise both output and quality. Cam Ranh district (Phu Khanh province) has expanded the breeding area by signing contracts with individual households, and applied proper technique to obtain ever higher yields. Within one year, improvement has been brought to 250 ha of water surface, 170 ha being devoted to shrimp farming. By late November 1986, the district's population had sold to the State 4 tonnes of shrimp. At present, the district is encouraging and giving guidance to individual families for them to make the most of the existing 600 ha of salt and brackish water surface available for aquiculture.

Artificially-bred and natural fry are raised together at the Nghia Binh farm, Can Tho College (Hau Giang province), Thu Duc (Ho Chi Minh City), Nha Trang Institute of Research on Aquatic Products No. 2 (Phu Khanh province) with encouraging results. By 1986, in the whole country 124,600 ha of water surface were devoted to shrimp farming; and 16,000 tonnes of shrimp were exported, that is 8.5 times the 1980 figure. Artificially-raised shrimps make up a good proportion of total exports. In Nghia Binh province: they account for half the total value of exported aquatic products.

The total area of brackish water surface will have risen to 200,000 — 300,000 ha in the whole country by 1990 with an output of 35,000 tonnes of shrimp, more than twice the present figure and the value of artificially-raised shrimp will represent from 25% to 40% of the total value of shrimp exports. The output of green shrimp will rise from 6,400 to 12,000 tonnes, that of lobsters from 300 to 1,000 tonnes.

To this end, the following tasks must be fulfilled: selection of strains, protection of breeding grounds, stable supply of fry: 5 — 10 million per year and expansion of the breeding of green shrimp to the central provinces and some Northern provinces.

MINH HUE

# AN INTERVIEW WITH SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER E. A. SHEVARDNADZE

*As reported in our previous issue (May 1987), Soviet Foreign Minister E.A. Shevardnadze recently made an official visit to Vietnam.*

*To further highlight the constructive stance of the Soviet Union concerning the struggle for peace and security in the Asian — Pacific region and the new development of bilateral Vietnamese — Soviet relations, we publish below the last part of the interview granted by the Soviet Foreign Minister to the daily* Nhan Dan, *central organ of the Communist Party of Vietnam, published on 15 March 1987.*

*Question:* The statement made by Comrade M.S. Gorbachev in Vladivostok and the New Delhi Declaration have received warm approval and support from world public opinion, especially in the Asian — Pacific countries. Would you comment on the prospects facing the struggle for peace and security in the Asian-Pacific region?

*Answer:* Before arriving in Hanoi, I had visited Thailand, Australia, Indonesia, Laos and Kampuchea. In Bangkok, Canberra, and Jakarta we perceived great interest in the ideas put forward by M.S. Gorbachev in Vladivostok. Our viewpoints completely tally with those of our Lao and Kampuchean friends.

I can say that the readiness to give active backing to the realisation of the theory on security in the Asian-Pacific region is based on the perception of political realities.

I wish to lay particular stress on the fact that the Socialist Republic of Vietnam plays an influential role in issues relating to the consolidation of security in Asia, and not only Asia. It has unswervingly struggled for all countries in the region to have equal and legitimate guarantees for their development in sovereignty and independence. That is because all countries in this region have at one time or another suffered from colonial plunder, the consequences of which still affect the life of many nations, impeding their progress. The Indochinese countries, where imperialism has acted the most savagely, have a moral right to become fighters for justice.

We have briefed the leading comrades of fraternal Vietnam in detail about the discussions we had. There has been a useful exchange of views on the question of security and cooperation in the Pacific and Indian Ocean region, on the situation in Indochina, on a solution to Kampuchea.

We have reached identity of views in the assessment and analysis of the situation. We have paid great attention to discussing in a constructive manner the most promising ways of solving the difficult problems of the region.

I believe that this exchange of views will lead to a still closer coordination of action between our two countries in the promotion of the ideas put forward by Comrade M.S. Gorbachev in Vladivostok, and those supported and approved by the Vietnamese leadership.

We know that the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is also engaged in a major undertaking aimed at realizing the proposal for the creation of a zone of peace, stability and cooperation in Southeast Asia. The most important factor here is the unity of mind and solidarity of the three Indochinese countries and their readiness to enter into dialogue with the ASEAN countries, China and all other interested parties.

The prospects for a wholesome political climate in Asia and the Pacific will depend in no small measure on the effectiveness of activities in this direction undertaken by all forces of peace, and their ability to strengthen trust and demonstrate that all countries in the region will benefit from the guarantee to their security.

*Question:* The Communist Party and the State of Vietnam have always considered solidarity with the Soviet Union to be the cornerstone of their policy. The Vietnamese people are conscious of the great significance of their friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union and are elated at every new development of this relationship. Comrade Minister, how do you view Soviet-Vietnamese relations at the present stage?

*Answer:* Vietnam is a fraternal country and the Vietnamese are spiritually dear and close to us, Soviet people. The image of your country is one of the clearest in our thoughts and feelings.

There exist relationships in many fields and of many kinds between our two peoples and our two countries. Our leaders hold regular and practical dialogues and maintain comradely, open and trustful relations.

Comrade M.S. Gorbachev maintains regular contact with the

(Continued on page 9)

Dien Bien Phu As Seen by A French Historian

# HOW DID OUR CONTEMPORARIES LIVE THE FINAL BATTLE OF THE FRENCH WAR IN INDOCHINA

ALAIN RUSCIO
*Doctor of History*

*More than three decades after Dien Bien Phu, the battle still remains the subject of controversy in France. Alain Ruscio, a French communist publicist and historian who has written many articles on Vietnam, tries to analyse the campaign launched by the French press at the time of this event in his study* "Dien Bien Phu from a masterly stroke to aberration" *or* "How did the contemporaries live the final battle of the French war in Indochina", *appearing in the* "French Review of Overseas History" *V. 72 (1985), No. 268, pp. 335 - 347.*

*Below is the translation of this article with, to our regret, unavoidable cuts due to lack of space.*

Editor

In October 1952, the Vietnam People's Army attacked Nghia Lo and Van Yen posts in Thai territory and forced the (French-Ed.) expeditionary troops to evacuate them. "No matter," the war advocates in France unanimously commented.

Yet it was the same region which, thirteen months later, was to be chosen as the site of a big, very big operation. Sixty Dakota transport planes dropped 3,000 paratroops in the middle of a basin. Within a few days the expeditionary forces had built a huge entrenched camp. Then new troops were flown in. By December, 12 battalions, three of them paratroops, were ready for battle. Some Western strategists spoke of the biggest troop concentration since World War II. In fact the French Command was hoping that Viet Minh troops would come down into the basin.

## Never Will Dien Bien Phu Fall

Doubtless the Viet would have their neck broken there. Dien Bien Phu was impregnable, this was as clear as daylight in the eyes of almost all Western military experts and observers.

This was, for instance, the opinion of General Navarre, Commander-in-Chief, who said to journalists on 19 February: "The Viet Minh has reached the top of its pretensions and has just given the proof that it has exceeded its logistic possibilities." For his part, General Cogny, commander of the French troops in Tonking (north Vietnam, *Ed.*), who was to become a specialist of resounding statements regularly quoted in the French press, said: "The French Command is sure to inflict a serious defeat on the Viet Minh at Dien Bien Phu. We expect to fight long and hard battles. We will win."

This official optimism was largely shared by various commentators of the French press. Thus, after the airdrop of troops was known in France, *l'Aurore* ran a banner title on its front page: "Navarre's new hard blow at the Viet: Thousands of paratroops occupy Dien Bien Phu. The French army confirms in Indochina the value of its soldiers and the authority of their commanders" (23 Nov., 1953). Thus this was the first lesson: France was showing that it still had an army worthy of its most glorious traditions. But Dien Bien Phu was also a strategic position of the utmost importance...

The press was quasi-unanimous to declare that "the place would be defended", that this was "a long-term operation to regain the confidence of the Thai in the region." Curiously enough, the main reason later advocated by General Navarre in his attempt to justify the operation — to shield Laos — was put forward only accessorially in November 1953.

In sum, it was a relatively complete panorama of the reasons behind the operation against a generally optimistic background. The most important political papers in France were led to think that the French H.Q. had given proof of its intrepidity and that its "surprise-attack" had "struck the Viet Minh in its rear". All the themes on the Indochina war

propagated by the French press since 1945 - 1946 were used: the enemy was doomed, he would suffer a major military setback. "The balance of forces does not seem to tilt in favour of the attackers, but in our favour." (*Le Figaro*, 8 January 1954).

*Le Figaro*'s correspondent held that Dien Bien Phu could be "a turning point in the Indochina war." He pointed to three elements: supply difficulties for the Viet Minh; harassment of (General-Ed.) Giap's rear by the French expeditionary corps (Ascendency had changed sides; it was now the turn of the Viet Minh to be in the dark as to where the next blow would fall); the "people's war" was out of breath. "In the shadow of the Viet Minh regular troops, brainwashed and fanatical, how many were wavering?" (*Le Figaro*, 23, 24 January 1954).

## Anxiety and Caution

This analysis was, however, not shared by all. Not surprisingly, *l'Humanité* was among the (rare) newspapers casting doubt about the official optimism. For the Communist paper, Dien Bien Phu was a new "face-saving operation" which was required to make people forget about the first setbacks of the "Navarre plan" and to satisfy "the US, which wants, once the dollars paid, the French troops to fight well". It may be noted that it was at that time that the military efficacy of Dien Bien Phu was called into question: "This new entranched camp, like others built previously, depends entirely on our aviation as two hundred kilometres liberated by the Vietnamese army separate it from French expeditionary corps bases and also exclude all possibility of retreat into the jungle." (23 November 1953) Finally, for *l'Humanité*, "The position of thousands of men penned up in Dien Bien Phu is critical from the outset." (31 December 1953) Likewise, *l'Observateur* voiced serious reserves: entrenched camps had all been "useless and incapable of hampering the people's army... The expeditionary forces are dispersed and exhausted in the pursuit of an elusive foe, or dig in in impregnable fortresses, which nobody attacks, but from which exit is denied to them." (19 February 1954) Here and there, in the press favouring the French war without reserve, a note of anxiety was sounded. On 7 January 1955, *l'Aurore* informed its readers that the Viet had "good heavy guns". Lucien Bodard wrote, "It would be a ticklish problem to keep Lai Chau and Dien Bien Phu should the Viet launch a large-scale offensive." (*France-Soir*, 22-23 November 1953)

There was thus, before the beginning of the battle, some confusion in the description of Dien Bien Phu in the assessment of the correlation of forces where there was a mixture of triumphalism and circumspection. With the exception of the communists and the editors of *l'Observateur*, the journalists seemed to waver between the desire to see the entrenched camp "break the Viet's backbone" and the anxiety to avoid a head-on encounter".

## The End of Illusions

That was why in mid-March the French authorities and observers learnt of the unbelievable news with boundless stupor: In three waves of assault, the Viet Minh took the forts named Gabrielle, Beatrice and Anne-Marie !. The expeditionary troops had put up a courageous resistance, but had had to surrender, not without suffering very heavy losses. Before the first major battle was finished Navarre said to a member of his staff: "Let us cast our illusions, the war is lost. I wish the Viet would not renew their attacks this evening. We must find something else." (Jules Roy, *La Bataille de Dien Bien Phu*, Paris, Julliard, 1963, p. 308)

In the press, however, the forced optimism was not so quick to vanish. The war partisans wanted to persuade themselves that these setbacks were but accidental happenings and that the losses of the Viet Minh had been so serious that they would be incapable of launching a follow-up attack. "By attacking Dien Bien Phu, hasn't the adversary committed a very big mistake?" (Robert Guillain, *Le Monde*, 16 March 1954) There was nothing to fear: "Despite the violence of his attack, the enemy has been repelled by the French and Vietnamese troops (of Bao Dai) who have inflicted on him enormous losses..." (*L'Aurore*, 15 March 1954) The imminence of a counter-attack was harped on. Is it necessary to point out that, according to subsequent studies, French counter-attacks were scarse and ineffective in most cases?

## The Heroism of Our Fighters

Orders from the H.Q.? Caution born of the development of the situation? The triumphalist tone gradually abated. The shadow of defeat began to loom over Dien Bien Phu. The themes of heroism gradually replaced that of certain victory.

In its 24 March issue, *l'Aurore* carried on its front page a statement made by John Foster Dulles, the US Secretary of State: "The heroic defenders of Dien Bien Phu are writing a magnificent chapter in French military history". Words were supported by photos. In that issue, the photo was printed of a wounded sergeant who had remained at his post. But the great expert in this field was already *Paris - Match*. From 20 March to 15 May, it printed 114 photos on Dien Bien Phu, of which five appeared on the cover (for five weeks running). Some characteristic captions: "They are writing a glorious page on the sky over Dien Bien Phu" (3 April 1954), "De Castries' men are showing to the world the face of France"... (8 May 1954). This tone was adopted by most of the French press (...) In short, there appeared such titles as "Verdun in the tropical forest" (*Paris - Match*, 7 April 1954), "Verdun of the Jungle (*Aurore*, 6 May 1954), "Tropical Verdun" (*Le Figaro*, 15 April 1954), "Tonkinese Verdun" (*Le Progrès de Lyon*, 15 April 1954).

In that world of heroes, two figures came to the fore: Colonel (later General) de Castries and the nurse Geneviève de Galard.

While after May 1954 General de Castries was to be frequently held responsible for the disaster, he was glorified in the course of the battle. Not a day passed without the press writing about this "fighting chief" who ended each of his radio reports with these words: "The morale of my men is tremendous." (*Paris - Match*, 17 April 1954) About de Castries, the excessive praises of the French press were only matched by its

subsequent unfair accusations. On 9 - 10 May, at the time of the fall of Dien Bien Phu, *France - Soir* without hesitation wrote: "After Dien Bien Phu Christian de Castries is one of the most prestigious heroes of French military history, who are many, and his name is sure to go down in history together with those of Bayard, du Guesclin, and Rivière."

An exceptional fact: a nurse was to remain in the entrenched camp till the end: Geneviève de Galard. (Even if this fact is not an exhilarating one, it must be admitted that G. de Galard was not the only woman to remain in Dien Bien Phu to the end; there were also some Vietnamese and North African prostitutes of the BMC[2] sent by the command in Hanoi; some of them were killed in the bombings; others turned into nurses and gave proof of great courage. I have found no mention of them in the French press of the time). A blessing for some papers. Quickly she became "the Dien Bien Phu angel" for almost all the commentators. Within a matter of weeks G. de Galard had earned a national, even international renown. In its issue of 8 May 1954, *Paris - Match* published her portrait on its first page. In less than one month, *France - Soir* mentioned her name six times on its front page.

## Anti-Heroism

Nobody has the slightest doubt about the exceptional courage of those thousands of men airdropped into hostile country, isolated in the centre of a basin the edge of which was held by the enemy, deprived soon of all material contact with the outside world, and living in terrible sanitary conditions.

But the political exploitation and sentimental blackmail were not accepted by all the French press: For instance, on 20 March 1954, *l'Express* denied the authorities the right to make political use of the heroism of the combatants. It denounced the "cheap shameless demagogy" of the Laniel Government. Charles Favrel of *Le Monde* criticized the "heroizing" ideology: "It is all very well to produce heroes en masse when there is for them no other alternative than to let themselves be killed. But just visit one evening the paratroopers who are to jump that night and you won't talk again of their morale." (22 April 1954) Others spoke ironically of the fact of calling courage a "French virtue", when the entrenched camp was defended not only by Frenchmen but also by Vietnamese (of the Bao Dai army), North Africans, Germans, Italians, Senegalese. Claude Bourdet, for instance, denounced the "scandalous sentimental exploitation" of the tragedy and its "French heroes", some of them being "SS prisoners released on condition of enlistment in the Foreign Légion" to kill the Viet so as to be forgiven the crime of having killed Frenchmen", (*l'Observateur*, 13 May 1954) On the other hand, the communist papers abstained from all polemics on this particular problem and more generally, on the theme of heroism. They contented themselves with exalting almost daily the victories of the Vietnam People's Army.

## The Image of the Adversary During the Battle

Facing those Western heroes, could the adversary be other than inhuman? Here one perceives what must be called a kind of racism. Such words were used as "the Viet onrush", "the frantic assaults of the Viet who suffer enormous losses" and similar expressions *Le Populaire* of 1st April wrote that "40,000 (Viet Minh) infantrymen, made fanatical" attacked in "screaming waves" and "without concern about losses". By definition the Viet could not be other than "fanatical masses" (*France-Soir* 1 April 1954), "indoctrinated and fanatical" soldiers who "rush on the barbed wire and are blown up by the mines like animals." (*Le Figaro*, 23 January and 2 March 1954)...

Here is the image of the adversary as seen by France through this press: thousands and thousands of soldiers, fearless of death (because made "fanatical") repeatedly assaulted French defences until they broke through them. The themes of "numberless Asiatic masses", of "yellow peril" were always subjacent. And so, for the reader of *France-Soir* or *Le Figaro*, Dien Bien Phu was not very far from his city quarter or his village: it was the prefiguration of a West which had a superior, humanistic civilization, but was submerged by Asian number, by nature alarming.

Moreover, this adversary was inhuman. He had turned down all French proposals for a truce to evacuate the wounded. He had taken advantage of victory to subject the vanquished to the most atrocious fate, probably with jubilation. One must add that this adversary was not only Asiatic; he was also communist, which, in the context of the cold war was a most aggravating circumstance. "We have to deal with... Communists. They are not men like others." (*l'Aurore*, 17 May 1954, in bold-face type).

## The Theme of Chinese Intervention

On 5 April, John Foster Dulles delivered a speech in which he affirmed that Chinese participation in combat was "terribly similar" to direct intervention. He quoted several "facts" including the presence of a Chinese general, Ly Chen Hu.

A large part of French political circles seemed to consider direct Chinese participation in the battle as an established fact. On 7 April, Jacques Fauvet unequivocally wrote that there was a "sudden evolution" of Chinese aid "not only in materials but in personnel, technicians, lorry drivers and even gunners" (*Le Monde*). Some even went to the length of affirming that Chinese infantrymen were taking part in the fight. For lack of evidence, however, most satisfied themselves with speaking of the possible presence of "technicians."

This much was regarded as an established fact: it was not the Vietnamese who controlled the general strategic direction. For the French reader in 1954, this was not a novelty: for ten years already, he had been given to understand that the Viet Minh was controlled by the Japanese, then the Chinese and the Russians...

Other journalists and political figures, first of all the Communists, called those allegations false. In its issue of 7 April, *l'Humanité* reproduced a Reuter cable saying that the French High Command in

Saigon denied all responsibility for the "information" released by Mr Dulles. The communist paper added that the name of "General Ly Chen Hu" was not mentioned in the lists of Chinese officers drawn up by British services in Hong Kong, or Japanese services in Tokyo, which were ordinarily very well informed. Pierre Courtade had this observation of simple logic: "Could Mr. Bidault (the then French Foreign Minister) explain how the Vietnamese were able to hold out for four years from 1946 to 1950, when the Chinese People's Army was 3,000 kilometres away from the Vietnamese frontier?" (*l'Humanité*, 7 April 1954)

Other observers, who were not communist, made similar remarks. On 22 April *Le Monde* denied the presence and probably the very existence of Ly Chen Hu. It added: "Neither the interrogations of prisoners nor the intelligence supplied by our agents have made any mention of the presence of a single Chinese in the Viet Minh army."

## The Theme of American Intervention

Begun as a classical operation of colonial reconquest, the French war in Indochina was soon, chiefly after 1949-1950, turned into an anti-communist crusade, thereby becoming, financially and also strategically, an Americanized war. In spring 1954, in the face of the absolute failure of the expeditionary corps, some ruling circles in the West came to the conclusion that the US must directly and vigorously intervene in the war. Feverish talks (chiefly between France and the US) were held. Hints were dropped of various possibilities, including the atomic bombing of Viet Minh communications and even of southern China; that was "Operation Vulture".

Among French political circles, divisions were clear-cut... Part of them eagerly wished for an intervention. Things were clear: since France was obviously not defending her selfish interests in Indochina, she no longer could and should bear alone the burden of the war. Raymond Cartier of *Paris-Match* admitted that the US should be left out of Indochina, "if it were at all possible to keep it within the French Union". As this possibility had become very slight, "opposition to the sending of American GIs, instructors or technicians can no longer be justified. On the contrary, it is in the French interest to drag the US as deeply as possible into a war, of which the burden is only tolerable if it is not for the defence of a great national patrimony" (*Paris-Match*, 3 April 1954); "Armed struggle for Southeast Asia is conceivable only if the US participates in the war, not only with its dollars, but also with its soldiers, not only with its steel, but also with its blood..." (*Paris-Match*, 8 May 1954)

This enthusiasm before the prospect of an extension of the war was rare. It frequently gave way to a certain resignation in face of an ineluctable phenomenon. After mentioning the "acceleration" of Chinese aid to the Viet Minh, Jacques Fauvet concluded that "an American reinforcement, and even a more important air support, have become indispensable and urgent. (*Le Monde*, 7 April 1954)

Other personalities said that while US intervention should not take place, French diplomacy should take full advantage of its threat. In an article with an evocative title ("Welcome to Mr. Dulles") Jean Jacques Servan-Schreiber wrote of "the huge military power, the mere threat of intervention by which has been very certainly useful for several years now to deter China from joining the fighting in Vietnam in case she should intend to do so." (*Le Monde*, 14 April 1954).

Raymond Aron rightly remarked that French policy could not confine itself to using the threat while dropping the hint that it would never materialize. "We must, as much as possible, avoid the extension of the war, but we must run the risk of enlarging it in order to secure an honourable peace." (...)

Against those themes, the Communists were nnt alone in opposing US intervention. On the contrary it seemed that the extension of the war was vigorously combated by most of the French political circles. No doubt that this was one of the reasons behind the coming to power of Pierre Mendès-France one month after the fall of Dien Bien Phu: indeed, because of blind anti-communism, because of total alignment with the most warlike elements among the US leaders, the Laniel-Bidault policy had led France to the brink of the abyss. And with her, peace.

On 3 April, *l'Express* wrote: "It seems at present that the Indochina war risks becoming soon an international war." Should this happen, "a great misfortune would have befallen the West, and this by the fault of our policy." In the same issue, François Mitterrand thought that such an eventuality was "inadmissible". Guy Mollet, secretary general of the *Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière* (SFIO) said that he stood for the preparation of the "democratic nations" to "check a new communist aggression", but sounded the "alarm" before the prospect of an immediate US intervention. *France-Soir* and *Le Monde* were of the same vein.

The communists and their allies vehemently opposed the risks of internationalization. In spring 1954, this was even the keynote of all the press of that tendency. American and French statements evoking the danger were especially noted. The 11 April issue of *l'Humanité-Dimanche* was seized by government decision. A banner title ran the full width of its front page: "The value of blood shed in Indochina is rising at the New

York Stock Exchange". A cartoon by Mitelberg showed Dulles as a peevish customer of a bar kept by Laniel, who was holding a bottle of blood. Holding out his glass, Dulles says: "Keep filling it, I'll pay."

### After the Fall of Dien Bien Phu

Verdun did not fall. Dien Bien Phu did, on 7 May 1954. While at first, most of the politicians and journalists had been able to deceive themselves and deceive the French public; if later they had been able to use the "heroism" card to mask the strategic, and chiefly political, deficiencies, after 7 May, there was no more possibility of evasion. A question had to be answered: Who was to blame?

Many people searched among the highest political circles in France. François Mauriac wrote in his weekly column: "Bitter thought, poisoned thought: this criminal and foolish history, this history of ten years written in red ink, has been written by Christians." From a more "technical" angle, Robert Guillain of *Le Monde*, also accused the Government: "Dien Bien Phu was not born in Indochina, but in Paris." Some anti-government criticism veered to the right: France had not been governed; in Indochina it had not had the will to wage with vigour a war against communism. Thus, "those responsible for Dien Bien Phu are no longer qualified."

Naturally, *l'Humanité* spoke in a quite different tone; for it the *Mouvement républicain populaire* (MRP) was also one of the first to be put in the box. Its leaders were "men who could do everything in Indochina, except make peace." The Dien Bien Phu tragedy was only "the outcome of a long chain of treasons and crimes of which the main culprits are known".

Beyond those purely political responsibilities, part of the French political circles began a polemic, which is not yet finished, about the chief French military commanders who, for "lack of intellectual foresight", had caused the tragedy. One of them, General Navarre, formerly praised to the skies, was the main defendant. His deputy for North Vietnam, General Cogny, was generally spared. It must be said that they had had completely different attitudes vis-à-vis the press. One was haughty and would snub the journalists, while the other was more accessible and would meet them almost every day.

* * *

In sum, the French press had always given a biased picture of the situation.

Before the battle most of the papers did not let the French people know what was truly at stake. Spontaneously, they repeated the themes used since 1947, whereas the conditions of the military confrontation had changed completely due to the reinforcement of the Vietnam People's Army. There was of course intoxication and also self-intoxication. Racist arrogance, contempt for the adversary, and rabid anti-communism played havoc.

During the battle, almost all the papers, exploiting the easy vein of heroism, did everything to hide the true responsibilities of the tragedy.

After 7 May 1954, despite some flashes of lucidity, the French press created diversion behind the mask of national unanimity in suffering and anti-communism. Only some periodicals, most fortunately, provided the French people with a few bits of the truth. ●

1. Called Doc Lap, Him Lam and Ban Keo, respectively, in Vietnamese war communiqués.

2. BMC: bordels militaires de campagne; military field brothels. (Ed).

## AN INTERVIEW...

*(Continued from page 4)*

leaders of your Party and country. Not long ago, Comrade E.K. Ligachev came to Vietnam to attend the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam. He held elaborate discussions with Comrade Nguyen Van Linh and visited many places and construction projects in your country.

My meeting with the General Secretary of the CPV Central Committee has left me with deep impressions.

We have many things to discuss at the present stage of development of our two countries. We look forward to the visit to Moscow of a delegation of the Vietnamese Party and Government headed by Comrade Nguyen Van Linh. My Vietnamese counterpart, Comrade Nguyen Co Thach, will also visit the Soviet Union, The invitation has been extended to him during my current visit.

Relations with the Communist Party of Vietnam and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam will continue to be given priority consideration by the Communist Party and Government of the Soviet Union.

While speaking of the "positive aspects" we should also, in a spirit of self-criticism, recognize that in our economic cooperation many potentials and possibilities have remained untapped. For instance, we may cooperate better and more effectively in the domain of science and technology. The idea of joint ventures is very promising, and this should concern not only major enterprises but also small ones, provided they are full of vitality and especially operate efficiently.

Efficiency comes first.

We are returning home in fine spirit. Our optimism has been strengthened and consolidated by the results of this visit. ●

Vietnam — Angola

## FURTHER SOLIDARITY AND COOPERATION

*Editor's Note: On 5 April 1987 in Hanoi a joint Vietnam — Angola communiqué was published on the occasion of the official visit to Vietnam by President J.E. Dos Santos. Herein below, is an excerpt from an editorial of* Nhan Dan *of 6 April 1987. The title is ours.*

The official friendship visit to Vietnam made on 4 and 5 April 1987 by a Party and State delegation of the People's Republic of Angola headed by Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, Chairman of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) — Workers' Party, State President and Chairman of the National Asembly, was crowned with success. The visit contributed to further consolidating and strengthening friendship and militant solidarity between Vietnam and Angola for the sake of their national construction and defence.

Relations between the two peoples began long ago and have developed ever more vigorously. Though the two countries are far apart they shared the same plight — oppression by colonialism and imperialism — and the same ideal and goals: independence, freedom and socialism. More than 70 years ago, going abroad to look for a way to liberate his country, President Ho Chi Minh came to Africa and participated in a number of revolutionary activities together with African revolutionaries in the spirit of solidarity binding together proletarians of oppressed nations. During their struggles for national liberation and national construction, the two peoples have always stood side by side and given sincere mutual support and help. In 1971, a MPLA delegation headed by the late President Agustino Neto, the founder of the Party and the State of Angola, visited Vietnam. As soon as Angola gained its independence, Vietnam officially recognized the People's Republic of Angola and the two countries established diplomatic relations. Subsequently, an agreement on cooperation between the Communist Party of Vietnam and the MPLA — Workers' Party was signed, and a Vietnam — Angola Intergovernmental Commission for Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation was set up.

The present visit to Vietnam by a Party and State delegation of Angola constitutes a new landmark in relations between the two countries. At the talks between the two Party and State delegations and at informal meetings between leaders of the two countries, the two sides reached total agreement on problems in bilateral relations and on international issues of mutual concern. The two sides informed each other of the implementation of their strategic tasks in national construction and defence.

On this occasion, our people once again warmly hail the great achievements gained by the Angolan people under the leadership of the MPLA — Workers' Party in the defence and building of an independent Angola advancing along the path of socialism. We reaffirm our strong support for the Angolan people's heroic struggle against the US-backed South African racist administration's schemes and acts of intervention and aggression, and we demand that the US and South Africa respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Angola.

In the face of the growing danger of a nuclear holocaust caused by the warlike imperialist forces headed by the US, Vietnam and Angola once again warmly welcome and totally support the constructive peace initiatives of the Soviet Union and the New Delhi Declaration regarding a world free from nuclear weapons and non-use of force in international relations.

The two sides reaffirm the necessity of turning Southeast Asia into a zone of peace, stability and cooperation. On this basis, Angola welcomes the goodwill peace policy and the constructive initiatives of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the People's Republic of Kampuchea. ●

## MERCHANTS OF DEATH

The United States is the biggest arms dealer of our epoch. 80% of US arms sales to Latin America in 1985 (worth about 494 million dollars) were to countries in Central America. During the same year, the biggest American firms dealing with the trade sold to various countries in the world arms worth over 111 billion dollars. This represents only the tip of the iceberg, secret sales made by the CIA and the Pentagon having not been fully exposed.

The most recent exposure concerns secret sales to Iran. As evidence accumulates, it becomes clear that the case is much more serious than so far admitted by the White House and the CIA. It is believed that the deal began in 1983, rather than 1985, and that in addition to the 2,000 anti-tank "TOW" and many surface-to-air "Hawks", the CIA and the Pentagon delivered to Iran air-to-air "Sidewinders", 30 F-4 jet fighter aircraft, 50 M-48 tanks, and at least 25 armed helicopters. The sum involved may have amounted to more than 1 billion dollars, not the mere 12 million dollars acknowledged by the Reagan Administration.

Moreover, the United States has agreed to supply Israel with 75 more F-16 jet fighter aircraft each of which costs up to 40 million dollars, bringing

the total value of the deal to about 3 billion dollars. Aircraft of the same type have also been sold to Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Singapore, and other countries. Moreover Saudi Arabia has bought 200 "Bradley" armoured personnel carriers for the sum of 500 million dollars.

Washington is also a leading supplier of means of repression, including armed helicopters, toxic-gas grenades, pistols, rifles and machine guns to various dictatorships. All equipment for the police in South Korea, El Salvador, Chile and Haiti has come from the United States.

## WHO VIOLATES HUMAN RIGHTS?

At a meeting of the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations last March, the representative of the United States charged the Soviet Union, Cuba, Vietnam and a number of other countries with violating human rights. At the same time, a report in the same vein was sent to the US Congress. Such ill-intentioned allegations are made at a time when the world's people are stepping up their struggle against the warlike policy of US-led imperialism aimed at pushing mankind to the brink of a nuclear catastrophe.

All people of conscience in the world hold that the most basic and sacred right of man is to live in peace, independence and freedom. Yet the United States is frantically accelerating the arms race and the militarization of outer space, and has persisted in testing and producing new types of mass-weapons which pose an ever greater danger to all nations on our planet. This is the most serious violation of human rights and it must be stopped in time.

Ironically enough, those who have perpetrated the abominable crime of dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, conducted a bloody war of aggression against the Indochinese peoples, invaded tiny Grenada, and at the present time continue to support and foster fascist dictatorships in Chile, El Salvador, South Africa, South Korea... which are strangling all democratic freedoms in those countries, those very people are loudly preaching the respect of human rights. Under the signboard of "defending human rights" Washington has supplied arms and guidance to the terrorists who are opposing the peaceful labour of the peoples of Nicaragua and Afghanistan. It has conducted armed provocations against the Republic of Libya, teamed up with other reactionary forces to oppose the rebirth of the Kampuchean people, and is working to undermine the independence and sovereignty of many other nations in the world.

Right in the United States, daily occurrences are contradicting Washington's pious sermons on human rights. The US has refused to adhere to the fundamental international documents on human rights. Of a total of 21 international agreements and conventions on human rights worked out at the United Nations (the two most important being the Convention on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights, and the Convention on Civic and Political Rights), it is party to only a few — those concerning the struggle against the slave traffic, the refugee problem and the political rights of women. To date, it has ratified only a negligible part of the 150 conventions elaborated by the International Labour Organisation. This show how little respect it has for one of the fundamental rights of man, the right to work.

At present, there are in the United States more than eight million unemployed. According to the American trade unions, the figure may be as high as 15 million. Unemployment has pushed millions of young Americans into an impasse — to drug addiction and crime. It is hardly imaginable that in such a rich country as the United States 35 million people are living below the poverty line and two million are homeless.

While loudly extolling "the free world" the US Administration has either openly or secretly conducted a policy of terror against American peace militants and prevented peace fighters from other lands to come to the United States. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has blacklisted no fewer than 34 million US citizens who are fighting for their fundamental rights, branding them as "security risks".

In the United States, the rights of minority groups and the foreign-born, especially those of Asian origin, are brutally suppressed. The total number of American Indians has dropped from 15 million to a mere 800,000, who have been driven into areas with the hardest living conditions. Their average life-span is only 44 compared to 76 for whites. Their infant mortality rate is three times that recorded among whites, and their living standard is officially rated below the poverty line. Washington turns a blind eye to the terrorist acts of the Ku Klux Klan against black Americans whose residential quarters are frequent targets of racist and police terror. Americans of Asian stock are also victims of brazen violations of human rights. For even harder work, they receive lower pay than whites. Racial discrimination against Asians is rampant and especially hit many of the Vietnamese who came to the United States after 1975.

The US Administration styles itself the "champion of human rights" and proclaims the defence of human rights to be a national policy of the United States. But its violations of human rights across the world and right in the United States fully expose its hypocrisy. This most brazen-faced abuser of human rights should stop his sanctimonious sermons. ●

# HO CHI MINH CITY 1987: SOME URGENT TASKS

PHAN VAN KHAI, *member of the CPV Central Committee and Chairman of the People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City, recently granted an interview to the correspondent of the daily* Nhan Dan *in which he spoke about the immediate socio-economic tasks of the city.*

*Four questions were dealt with: How to accelerate the production of consumer goods; increase exports; get rid of the subsidy-based system of management; create more jobs and improve housing conditions and the environment.*

## Programme Number One: To Accelerate the Production of Consumer Goods

Vietnam's economy is facing an acute contradiction, that between the inadequate supply of consumer goods and the large amount of money in circulation, which has resulted in a slow retrieval of the money injected into society and the circulation of money among the population escaping the control of the State bank. The bulk of this money serves in buying and selling operations which produce no new value. To put a brake to the soaring prices and step by step bring them down, more goods must be produced and the State must control the major part of them. In that context, it is a completely correct policy to encourage the production of consumer goods as advocated by the Sixth Party Congress. The point is how to rapidly increase the production of tens of thousands of different kinds of goods, first and foremost the necessities.

Ho Chi Minh City, an important economic centre, currently accounts for more than 30% of the consumer goods produced in the whole country. More goods can be put under State control through a variety of incentives, especially concerning prices and investments, and would constitute, together with the output of State-owned enterprices (both centrally and locally-run) a large "commodity fund". To this end, the central economic departments should, starting from the beginning of this year, supply raw and other materials, fuels and energy to the city in concentrated, not scattered, fashion. In fact, for many years now the city has received only about 40—50% of the materials it needed. This has compelled it to work on materials put out by the provinces, which has led to a confused situation.

Now, the city must seek to ensure its own supply. But how?

First, it must increase its exports in order to import the necessary materials. In 1987 it will devote about 20 million roubles-dollars to importing materials and equipment which will be supplied to those branches which are most capable of producing export commodities and earning foreign exchange. Investments will not be dispersed and will be based on economic efficiency.

Secondly, the city has asked the Government for permission to borrow foreign capital for the deployment of the consumer goods programme.

Thirdly, it will encourage overseas Vietnamese wishing to send gifts to their families to send them not luxury goods as they have done so far but materials and equipment. Customs duties will be either reduced or there may even be total exemption, depending on the kinds of goods. Provisional regulations will soon be promulgated in this respect.

Fourthly, the city has proposed that the central government adopt an appropriate policy with regard to gifts in cash (rate of exchange and formalities). This will also help increase the possibilities for the production of consumer goods.

The guideline is to concentrate on consumer goods of high value, to gain profits and ever higher returns, to ensure enlarged reproduction, and to modernize equipment.

This year the city will continue perfecting its policies vis-à-vis production establishments in accordance with Resolutions 34 and 192 of the City People's Committee. It will issue provisional regulations for the implementation of the draft resolution Number 306 of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee regarding State-run enterprises. We will unravel the tangles one by one, giving the highest possible incentives to the producers in all economic sectors provided they comply with Government regulations. The producers must enjoy higher incomes than the traders and a brake must be put on the tendency to shift to commercial activities. The circulation and distribution departments must purchase goods right at their sources and at reasonable prices acceptable to the producers, and sell them directly to the consumers.

## Boosting Exports: Another Priority

It is a fact that nowhereelse in the whole of Vietnam are there such favourable conditions for boosting exports (in addition to tourism, services, and remittances from overseas Vietnamese) as Ho Chi Minh City. The city must therefore become the biggest producer of export goods in the whole country.

For years, due to an incorrect implementation of the Party's decision about the devolution of powers, especially in the domain of import and export, a situation has arisen in which different provinces and cities scramble for exportable products, thus pushing up their prices. This has become a real calamity for the economy of Ho Chi Minh City and indeed of the whole country.

To mobilize all possibilities in the procurement of exportable commodities, the city has applied a policy of priorities: producers of export goods in the State sector and other economic sectors as well, will receive in priority funds, cash, equipment, materials, energy, etc. The farmers on the city outskirts are encouraged to expand the cultivation of groundnut and pineapple and shrimp farming. Business cooperation with the provinces is to be focused on production and must result in mutual benefit.

The target for the value of exports from Ho Chi Minh City in 1987 is 200 million roubles-dollars.

1987 will also see the expansion of subcontracting with fraternal socialist countries and also non-socialist countries. The target is to turn out more than 100 million shoe uppers and 30 — 40 million garments by 1990. The city will also assemble electronic goods for the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Czechoslovakia... In addition, more young people will be sent abroad to learn a trade or work under contract. The Bulgarian experience shows that within barely a few decades, this country, at the outset one of the poorest farming countries in Europe, has grown into a developed country through subcontracting and importing modern equipment to manufacture high-technology products.

Through cooperation in this field with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, Ho Chi Minh City will provide employment for tens of thousands of its inhabitants.

The city is ready to engage in subcontracting with capitalist countries. It will actively expand its operations in chandlery and ship repairs as a step toward having a ship-building industry of its own.

Of course, the implementation of the above programmes will not be smooth sailing. For several years now our management of foreign trade has gone from one extreme to another. Shifting from a complete monopoly of the Foreign Trade Ministry, we have given a free rein to ministries and provinces in undertaking import-export transactions, which has led to confused scrambling, loopholes, and losses. If this is allowed to continue there will be no way for the State to determine and control unified exchange rates.

On the other hand, it must be recognized that there has been no real incentive for producers of export goods. Many of them have even incurred more losses as they increased their exports. That situation must be remedied. Another handicap is the lack of professional knowledge and exprience of our managers. Little attention has been paid by them to market surveying. Because of this lack of dynamism and flair they have let good opportunities slip. The city will strive to redress these deficiencies and make the most of its abilities and potentials.

## Active Steps to Unravel the Price-Wage-Money Problems

The general adjustment of prices, wages and the currency system has led to price upheavals which have escaped State control.

The rise in prices is due to many reasons: low productivity, hoarding and speculation, economic sobotage by hostile forces, the working of the law of supply and demand... In any event, the present situation is far from normal. It has led to many negative aspects in economic management. It is clear that the longer a solution to this problem is delayed, the more materials, money and commodities will be lost and the more cadres corrupted. As seen by the city authorities, the key to a solution of this problem is to concentrate investments and give a vigorous boost to production, thereby producing more commodities, then to control the circulation of these goods and of the money in circulation. Accordingly, prices, first of all those of raw and other materials, must be gradually and steadily adjusted. On the basis of a stable development of production, the wages and incomes of workers and public employees will be readjusted. It will be a complicated and difficult job but under no circumstances shall we return to the outmoded system of management based on State subsidies.

For many years now the city, creatively applying the viewpoints of the Party, has step by step done away with the mechanism of management based on State subsidies and shifted to economic accounting and the socialist mode of enterprise. Many useful lessons have been learnt from practice at the grassrcots. The fact is that we cannot continue to supply food to more than four million people at the artificially low subsidized prices of 4.2 *dong* a kilo of rice and 40 — 50 *dong* a kilo of pork. No financial system and no budget could provide such subsidies for ever. Only by pricing goods close to their real value can we have a true economic picture. On the other hand we must not buy and sell at high free-market prices and depart from the economic laws of socialism. The more complicated the situation becomes, the harder we must promote the economic laws of socialism which call for a balanced and planned development of the economy.

In Ho Chi Minh City where more than 30% of the consumer goods of the country are produced, failing an appropriate volume of available cash and a rational price policy, production will immediately stagnate and this will affect all other activities.

In a word, in order to have a radical solution to the problem of prices, wages and money, we must resolutely combat the idea and mechanism of economic management based on subsidies and overcome the present confused situation.

We must apply serious cost accounting and practise the socialist mode of enterprise aimed at raising economic efficiency and giving a strong boost to commodity production.

## Finding a Solution to Employment, Housing and Environmental Problems

On the social plane, beginning in 1987, the city will concentrate on the following tasks: more jobs, better housing, and an improved environment.

Foremost among the concerns of the City's Party organisation and administration is the employment problem. Over the last ten years much effort has been exerted but the question is far from resolved. Crimes and other social evils, particularly among the young, cannot be effectively dealt with so long as adequate measures are not taken to involve them in productive activities and ensure for them an honest living.

This year, the city will pay special attention to developing small-scale industry and handicrafts in order to make full use of the productive capacities of all the five economic sectors, promote subcontracting in the making of export products, and expand the production of foodgrain and other foodstuffs in the suburban areas in order to create stable employment.

Better housing for workers and public employees is another imperative. Outwardly, in many quarters the problem seems to have been solved. But that is not so. About fifty thousand families are still living in hovels along dirty canals. In addition, there are nearly 150 places in the city where people live in overcrowded quarters.

To provide or improve housing space for 100,000 inhabitants each year is not a simple affair. Starting from this year the city will allow public employees and workers who have been allocated Government-owned houses to buy them and will use the money to build new residential blocks. Everybody will be able to improve his housing conditions by using his legitimate revenues. The Government will also sell building materials and allot land to people for house building in the suburbs with a view to step by step clearing the slums along the canals. At the same time, together with the central Government agencies and the Ministry of Defence, the city will re-examine and readjust housing allocation, redress the wasteful use of land, and repair dilapidated houses.

Parallel with those measures, the city will take the necessary steps to combat pollution: dredging the canals, reducing water and air pollution due to factories, reducing traffic noise, etc.

* * *

Those major programmes to be fulfilled in 1987 will be the first steps toward the realisation of the socio-economic programmes which must be completed by 1995, the year of the 20th anniversary of the liberation of the city.

NGUYEN KIEN PHUOC

*Towards Renovation in Socio-Economic Life*

# SOME PROBLEMS OF ARCHITECTURE TODAY

Only by placing our architectural achievements against the national background — our country has just stepped out of a long war and is still beset with untold difficulties and obstacles owing to shortages and inertia — can we properly assess the value of each new block of flats, hospital and house of culture. It can be said that our architecture has taken the right path — that of serving the masses. However, we must frankly admit that we have been advancing very slowly.

Now, it is not the time for our architectural workers to feel self-satisfaction and sing their own praises. On the contrary, we must seriously review the efforts made and the materials used on the one hand, and the results on the other. It is also time for us to assess the efficiency of our capital investments as well as the quality of our works. Frankly speaking we have made not a few mistakes. We have been wasteful, have spread our investments thin, and have failed to achieve "a distinct architectural physiognomy". We must try to find out the causes of these shortcomings.

For the time being, the problem of the harmonious combination of tradition and modernity still remains to be solved. What is tradition? What is modernity? For many people, these remain theoretical concepts which are often not clearly understood. Our shortcomings stem in the first place from our view of designers. Our College of Architecture trains a sizable number of young architects every year; but owing to circumstances, the quality of training is still mediocre. Moreover, no proper encouragement is given to men of talent. For this reason, we have failed so far to train a contingent of "bellwethers". There has not been effective legislation to support the personality and talent of the architect. Worse still, many architects have been working rather carelessly.

The present mechanism of management is still a problem. The chain of architectural work is unstable. Resource surveying, economic zoning, and urban planning have not supplied the designers with enough interesting themes and subjects.

According to the present statutes, the organization of research, designing and planning is run by the State Committee for Capital Construction. Its offices are present at all three administrative levels: central, provincial and local. These offices work out orientations for architecture, taking into account such factors as climate, terrain, customs and habits, cultural traditions, etc. These considerations should be conveyed to the designers and the executors. Nevertheless, at present the designers work almost independently of the planning and zoning department. This leads to the fact that in many localities our constructions are unattractive, show lack of originality and creativity, and may hamper the development of architecture in the years ahead.

The relationship between design and execution still has its problems. For a long time, the idea that "design must serve execution" has held sway. The designers must conform to the "requirements and recommendations" of those in charge of execution.

There are still a lot of absurdities in contracting and pricing; in the organization of schools of architecture; in their curricula, in the employment of their graduates, etc. It is high time for us to revise and reform.

The relationship between leading cadres and experts, the working methods of leading cadres at various levels, etc., need improving. Red-tape and the tendency to conclude false agreements develop: at conferences, resolutions and decisions are passed unanimously, but once back in their offices, the designers will follow only their own tastes or know-how. The question of design copyright still leaves much to be desired. Egalitarianism is still rampant.

More such shortcomings could be mentioned. In any event, one serious weakness lies in the training of architects: their theoretical instruction is deficient, they lack a critical spirit and scientific and technological information in their field.

Obviously, in the years to come we must find a way out of this situation beset by wrong ideas and irrational mechanisms. Although funds for construction are limited our architects can nonetheless record greater achievements if they know how to re-organize their work.

The State should institutionalize the role, function and responsibilities of the Vietnam Association of Architects, a professional organization established a long time ago. The Association should become a full participant in every undertaking and have a say in capital construction. This relates specially to the planning of major cities and populous residential areas, and to important civil-engineering works with a great social and aesthetic impact. Nowadays, urban planning calls for the combination of multiple factors: economic, social, biological, physical and aesthetic. It would be quite wrong to content oneself with building dwelling places! That is the reason why research here should be an interdisciplinary undertaking, relating to many fields of science and technology. The Association may assist the State Committee for Capital Construction in its capacity as a member of the Consultative Council of Experts and have a say in important building projects.

The Association should take further responsibility in the training and employment of architects. In order to encourage creative labour it should be able to propose names for awards and have a decisive role in the granting of prizes. The State should give it financial help for research work and other activities relating to the science, theory and criticism of architecture, and for conducting techno-scientific experiments.

Parallelly, workers in architecture must clearly define the line of development of their art in the years to come and work out a proper organization and mechanism to implement it. Vietnamese architecture should be rooted in the characteristics of nature in our country, its cultural traditions and at the same time stay close to socio-economic realities. It must learn from the experiences and achievements of architecture in foreign countries, first and foremost the fraternal socialist countries, with a view to making our architecture both modern and national. Organization must be unified and link together research, theory, criticism, designing, planning, management and training. It is also of paramount importance to enact a law on capital construction and architecture in which are clearly stipulated the role, responsibility and rights of the architect in the exercise of his profession.

VINH LE

# TAY NGUYEN
# ON THE PATH TO SOCIALISM

Tay Nguyen (also called the Central Highlands) is the designation for the mountain region embracing three western provinces of central Vietnam — Lam Dong, Gia Lai — Kon Tum and Dac Lac. Its area is 5.5 million hectares, or one-sixth of the natural area of Vietnam. It consists of five plateaux separated from one another by spurs of the Truong Son Range. Despite various projects, little of this vast region has been developed so far. This article attempts to provide a general view of the region.

## Pluses and Minuses

The region is dotted with mountains, rising up to 1,000 metres above sea level. It stands in the path of the north-easterly and south-westerly air masses that make up the monsoon regime in Vietnam. Climatic conditions change greatly from one area to another as a result of the different heights of the constituent tablelands: 160 metres at Phu Bon, 400 metres at Buon Me Thuot, 800 metres at Pleiku, and 1,200 metres at Da Lat. Hence the great variety of agricultural products. Phu Bon, where average temperature is 25 degrees Celsius and average rainfall 1,300 mm, is suited to the growing of rice, subsidiary food crops, groundnuts and cotton, and to the raising of water buffaloes. The temperature of 22 — 23 degrees Celsius and the rainfall of over 2,100 mm at Buon Me Thuot and Pleiku are good for rubber, coffee, sugarcane, fruits and meat cattle. The cool climate at Bao Loc, where it rains up to 3,000 mm a year and where the temperature is 21.5 degrees, is ideal for mulberry, tea and dairy cattle. At Da Lat, it is cool all the year round, with a temperature of 19 degrees and a rainfall of 1,700 mm. Temperate-climate vegetables and fruits, and animals like milch cows thrive there.

In Tay Nguyen 22 big rivers take their rise, forming three systems: the system which runs through the southern part of central Vietnam, from Da Nang to Tuy Hoa; the Dong Nai system; and the group of rivers which join the central and lower stretches of the Mekong River. In terms of water, alluvium and aquatic products, these rivers, moving as they do up to 42 billion cubic metres of water to the sea in a year, affect a mainland area twice the size of Tay Nguyen and almost half of Vietnam's continental shelf.

As far as land potentials are concerned, agricultural land accounts for 36% of the cultivable area and 24% of the natural area of Tay Nguyen. (The ratios are 30% and 11% in Lang Son province, 23% and 12% in Hoang Lien Son province, and 14% and 12% in Quang Ninh province.) In terms of geographical economy, Tay Nguyen is advantageously situated. It is within easy reach of the coastal provinces that make up central Vietnam, where there are good sea ports and the north-south Highway 1 and the trans-Vietnam railway. A little further south is Ho Chi Minh City, a big port and an important economic centre. South of Tay Nguyen are the vast southern plains which account for the greater part of the country's rice output and which lie along a coast rich in maritime produce. They are a vast market for produce from Tay Nguyen and can send it foods and consumer goods.

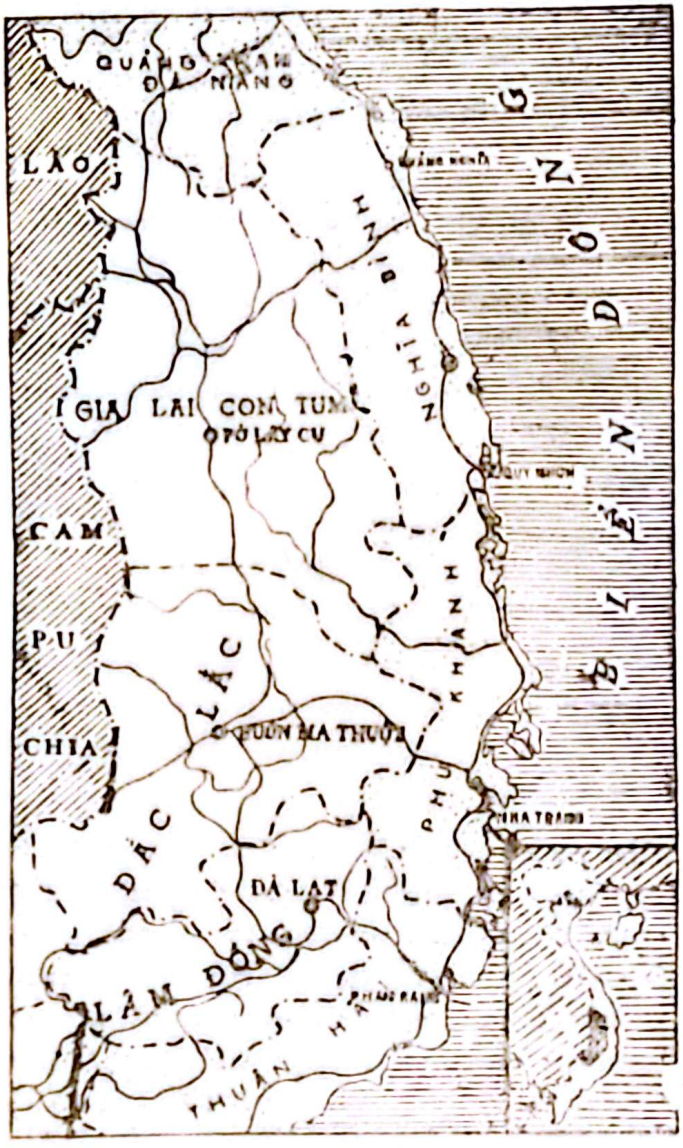
Tay Nguyen's biggest asset is its forests, which cover about 2.5 million hectares, or 32% of the total forested area in Vietnam, and hold 45 — 46% of the country's timber reserves.

The second advantage is the existence of 1.5 million hectares of agricultural land (one-sixth of the national total). What makes this agricultural land

particularly interesting is the special soil and climatic conditions which are suited for rice, maize and other food plants, and for valuable industrial crops like rubber, coffee and tea. (See "Industrial Crops in Tay Nguyen" in this issue.)

Last but not least is the presence of huge deposits of bauxite and the great potential in hydro-electricity which together with the above factors, could lead to a vigorous development of Tay Nguyen in forestry, agriculture and industry.

However, many difficulties have to be overcome. The biggest one is the uneven seasonal distribution of rainfall, with the division of the year into two distinct seasons — a rainy season and a dry season. This has a profound effect on animal and plant life. Rainfall is concentrated on high-altitude, high-gradient areas which make up about 79% of the region's territory. Flat, low-lying areas where water can be stored and used most effectively account for only 19%. Over vast expanses of basaltic soil where agriculture can be developed most favourably, only a few streams flow, and wherever they do the water level is often too low to be of easy use. Rainfall also varies greatly in space. It can be 1,200 mm in one area and 2,500 — 3,000 mm in another. That explains why, in the present conditions, only about 20% of the surface water can be used for agriculture. As for underground water one will have to drill very deep for it, at 50 or even 100 metres below ground level. In a word, water shortage is very acute in the dry season. The problem is compounded by the great damage caused to the vegetation cover by slash-and-burn farming, a deep-rooted practice which has not yet been completely overcome.

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Basaltic soil, in general, is good for agriculture. However, it is feared that decay has already affected up to 50% of the basaltic area.

The existence of two distinct seasons, one wet, the other dry, and the serious water shortage in the latter pose great problems for man's activities. The wet season hampers the drying and storing of agricultural produce, halts forest exploitation, and transport and communications. Strong winds, blowing at 3 — 5 metres per second, aggravate the deterioration of the top soil and accelerate evaporation thereby worsening water shortage in the dry season.

## Initial Successes

It is in agriculture that Tay Nguyen has especially distinguished itself since the complete liberation of southern Vietnam in 1975. Food output in 1983 was 600,000 tonnes, and the 1976 per capita food availability of 246 kilograms was raised to the national average of 300 kilograms. A fast development has been recorded in the planting of im-

portant crops like rubber, coffee, tea and cinnamon. The State sector has developed strongly with the appearance of a large number of State farms specializing in industrial crops, food crops and livestock breeding, and of dozens of logging camps. The collective sector has done rather well with the formation of 250 agricultural cooperatives and 1,800 production groups, mostly in areas where industrial crops and rice are planted on a large scale.

There has been marked improvement in the quality of life. Good sanitation is gaining ground and medicines are replacing witch doctors. Thanks to sufficient investments, each dicstrict is provided with a cinema projection team. In Lam Dong, average yearly cinema attendance is 10 in urban areas and 5.5 in rural area (the national average is five). It is 8 in Dac Lac, and 6 in Gia Lai — Kon Tum. Considerable progress has been made in popular culture and art, by the many folk festivals in Gia Lai — Kon Tum, in Dac Lac and Lam Dong with the participation of troupes from the coastal provinces of Nghia Binh and Phu Khanh. Research on folk culture is being conducted at many places.

Great effort has been made in general education and professional training. The core of the workforce consists of 100,000 trained cadres, among them 38,000 women and 8,000 members of minority ethnic groups. Of them, over 50,000 have graduated from junior secondary schools, 1,800 from senior secondary schools, 6,000 from colleges or junior colleges, 9,000 from secondary vocational schools, and 1,300 from elementary or secondary courses on economic management.

## A national effort

In spite of the progress achieved, up to the early 1980s production in Tay Nguyen was still sluggish and living conditions still lagged behind other parts of the country. Among the main causes was the nomadic life led by minority ethnic groups and the lack of manpower, especially skilled labour. The Communist Party and the Government have set in motion a plan to sedentarize nomadic people, while bringing in settlers from other parts of the country. The aim is twofold: bringing into use the vast resources of the region and improving the material and cultural life of the local people.

There have been changes in the ethnic composition of Tay Nguyen, which used to be inhabited solely by minority ethnic groups — the Bahnar, the Ede, the Sedang, etc. — who were known under the common designation of *Thuong*, or highlanders. At the turn of the century, *Kinh* (or *Viet*, members of the majority group) began moving to Tay Nguyen. By 1935, their number had increased to 20,000 (5.5% of the population). By 1980, there were 797,000 Viet in Tay Nguyen (52% of the population), and the number keeps rising.

Most of the Viet who came to Tay Nguyen immediately after Liberation were Party and administrative cadres, activists and technical workers. Their presence was necessary for the establishment and consolidation of revolutionary power. The more recent settlers are mainly agricultural workers.

The Viet live mostly in the towns but have also founded communities close to roads and streams. They live in harmony with the minorities and encourage them to join in production and trading.

Altogether, 400,000 Viet arrived in Tay Nguyen in the eight years from 1976 to 1984. Those people have contributed considerably to socio-economic development in the region.

Yet a number of them are not sure they will live there for very long, considering the poor quality of life. So, how to make life more attractive, what people to send to Tay Nguyen, and how to ensure effective cooperation between new settlers and the indigenous people are some of the main problems to be solved in the current demographic programme.

DAO QUANG BINH

*Twilight over Mount Ngoc Linh.*

*Photo:* NGUYEN THU

# A STORY OF LATTER-DAY CAVE-DWELLERS

Ama Sun threw a log into the blazing fire and turned to me. "Ever seen a cave-dweller?" he asked.

"In this part of the country?" I asked with some surprise.

"Yes." Sun smiled in a curious way. "You'll see some of them. Only four or five kilometres from here. We'll visit them tomorrow if you wish. About one and a half hours' walk. Now, let's go to bed."

Sun said no more and got up.

He went to the back of the house, leaving me alone in the front room. Could they be true after all I wondered, those stories about cave men that I occasionally heard during my wanderings in Tay Nguyen (the Central Highlands). In any event, now that I had an opportunity to meet some of them, I wouldn't let it slip.

* * *

About a dozen "long houses", all facing in the same direction, looking like boats lying at anchor. This was Mle, an Ede hamlet, like many others I had visited, with one little difference, though: the "long houses" here were visibly smaller.

Sun took me to the end of the hamlet, where stood a hut so small it looked like a toy. We went up the steps — notches cut into a tree trunk the size of a banana palm. The door was closed. Sun rapped on it. After a while, which seemed to me to last an hour, the door opened noiselessly and a human figure appeared: a young girl.

"It's you, H'Dlie? Where's your mother?" Sun asked.

"Gone to the fields," the girl said, almost inaudibly, and turned on her heel.

We followed her into the house. This rather cold reception did not surprise me. The Ede talk little, but they are hospitable in their own discreet way.

Presently, H'Dlie returned with a few sticks which she put down by the fire, and looked at Sun in silence. Sun knew what he had to do. He fed the sticks into the fire, which soon leapt up. The girl put a kettle on it.

"When will you get yourself a husband ?" Sun asked, with a wink. H'Dlie blushed and got up. She walked as far as the partition which separated the front room from the back of the house, but stopped at the door leading into it. There she remained, a shy smile on her lips.

"That's one of them," Sun said. Before I knew what he meant he went on. "H'Dlie means 'Jungle Girl'. When I first met her and her folks she was only nine. Her father died last year. Poor man. He's survived by his wife, though. Well, we ran into them by chance. That was in 1979, four years after Liberation. Bandits were still roaming the forests. One day, in our pursuit of a band deep into a jungle area bordering on Lam Dong, we came upon a patch of burnt-out clearing and wondered if it was the work of the bandits. Bandits sometimes had to raise food crops when supplies ran low. Anyway, we decided to lie in ambush for them there. Where there's a fire there're people. Early next day, in the morning fog we spotted three persons coming our way. We were about to open fire when Ama Luc, our squad leader, stopped us.

"They don't look like bandits" he whispered. "Wonder if they're forest people."

"We took a long look at the blurred figures and finally made out a man, a woman and a little girl. The man's long hair fell on his chest. His nudity, like the women's, was covered with things like pieces of bark. The little girl was completely naked. Although they were obviously going to work on the burnt-out clearing they carried no bush-knives, but only a stick, which the man held in his hands. And they had no firearms. Bandits would never roam about without their guns.

"We sneaked up to them but were spotted when we were about twenty metres away. The man gave a shriek, and the three turned and fled into the jungle. We ran after them but the man and the woman were so fast and nimble they soon disappeared from view. We caught the little girl, though, but not without suffering few scratches and bites: She fought like a wild cat.

"We were certain that the others, who we surmised were her parents, would return for her. Two days later we detected footprints near our camp. We followed the traces to a small cave and, by setting another ambush, got both the man and the woman. There was nothing in the cave except a smoldering fire. We also found the stick. It was a hoe whose iron blade had worn down to a stump.

"We took all three of them to the provincial military authorities. They gave them food and clothes and tried to learn something from them. It turned out they were neither bandits nor cave-dwellers, but an Ede family from Mle hamlet.

"It all began in the '60s. There was a Saigon army post in the area, built at the foot of Mount Eagle, and raids were conducted by the soldiers every day. The post commander, Captain Y Pao, one day caught sight of H'Ring, the most beautiful girl in the village and ordered the hamlet chief to bring her to him. Her sweetheart, a young man named Y Lut, was to be pressed into service in the army. So H'Ring and Y Lut decided to run away. Y Pao, mad with anger, sent troops after them. The fugitives kept on the move, going from one remote place in the jungle to another, avoiding all human presence. Years went by without their being discovered.

"Their clothes were reduced to shreds, and they replaced them with pieces of tree bark. They ate wild fruit and tubers. The little rice they had brought with them was sown and they reaped successive crops. A child was later born to them and had grown into a girl of nine by the time we ran across them.

"Tay Nguyen was liberated in 1975. The post at the foot of Mount Eagle was razed to the ground, and its commander, Captain Y Pao, was killed. But long after the liberation of Mle, H'Ring, Y Lut and their child were still roaming the jungle, knowing nothing of the great changes. Had it not been for their chance encounter with our bandit-hunting platoon, they would eventually have become real savages.

"What about the fire you saw in their cave ?" I asked, "How did they get it started ?"

"Yes, we wondered about that, too." Sun said. We asked the man and he told us that they had simply thought of taking with them a few live coals when they left the hamlet. The fire was kept alive by them all along these years in the jungle. It must have evoked in their minds, as they looked at the leaping flames during stormy nights, the joyous village festivals when people happily danced and drank rice wine from an earthern jar through supple bamboo pipes."

TO DONG HAI

# INDUSTRIAL CROPS
# AN ASSET OF THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Ranking first among the industrial crops grown in the Central Highlands is rubber, which tops the list of our agricultural exports. It covered 174,000 hectares by 1985, mainly in Dac Lac and Gia Lai — Kon Tum provinces, and yielded nearly 2 tonnes of latex per hectare.

Coming second is coffee, grown over 39,000 hectares in 1985 (1.8 times more than in 1980) and yielding over one tonne of beans per hectare. Between 1980 and 1985 the State coffee plantations in the Central Highlands delivered 2,000 tonnes of coffee beans. Vietnam has signed cooperation agreements in coffee planting with the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia. Nearly 12,000 hectares of coffee have been planted in implementation of these agreements, using modern methods.

As far as tea is concerned, according to 1985 statistics, 53,000 hectares have been planted to this crop (75.8% more than in 1980), mainly in Lam Dong and Gia Lai — Kontum provinces. In the former province, mulberry is also grown over 6,500 hectares. The target is 40,000 hectares.

In the Central Highlands, apart from those perennial industrial crops, we can develop short-growth ones, usually food plants. At present, the area under them covers 618,000 hectares (an increase of 66.2% over 1980) including 98,000 hectares of soya, 211,000 hectares of groundnuts, 146,000 hectares of sugarcane, 43,000 hectares of tobacco, 21,000 hectares of jute, 15,000 hectares of rush. Soya and groundnuts in particular bid fair to develop and have a high export value. In 1985, soya was grown over 96,000 hectares and yielded 86,000 tonnes of beans (twice the area and 2.7 times the output of 1980). 1982 was a peak year for soya: 103,000 tonnes. As for groundnuts, exports totalled 37,000 tonnes in 1983, 41,000 tonnes in 1984 (nearly 5 times the figure of 1980). Tobacco was planted on 14,000 hectares in 1980, 43,000 hectares by 1985. Jute, used to make bags for export goods, occupied 43,000 hectares in 1985 (42% above the 1980 figure). Rush accounted for 89,000 tonnes in 1985 (an increase of 19% over 1980). On the basis of cooperation with the Soviet Union, cotton has begun to be grown and covers over 20,000 hectares at present.

QUOC HUNG

*In a State rubber plantation of Dac Lac province.*
*Photo:* PHAM DO

# TAY NGUYEN UNIVERSITY IS TEN YEARS OLD

With the founding of Tay Nguyen University in the Central Highlands in November 1977, for the first time in their history, the ethnic minorities living in this remote region have had an establishment of higher-education of their own.

The first rector of the university was Ytlam Kbourk, a man from the Ede minority. He had been during the war years a lieutenant colonel in the medical corps of the Vietnam People's Army. While caring for wounded soldiers, he had dreamt of the day when he would be able to pass on his knowledge to children of the minorities living in his native region. This dream came true when he was given the task of organizing Tay Nguyen University in Buon Ma Thuot, the provincial capital of Dac Lac province, two years after liberation.

In the first two years of its existence, the University had only three departments: medicine, pedagogy, and agriculture. Later on, a department of basic specialities and one of forestry were added, and the pedagogy department became a separate teacher-training college.

The present teaching staff numbers 144. Most of them are post-liberation graduates from colleges in southern cities like Hue, Da Nang, and Ho Chi Minh City. It is to be noted that the University's own graduates account for one-third of them, including eight sprung from minority groups and two with post-graduate training.

The material infrastructure has been gradually strengthened. So far the University has 9,240 square metres of floor space, 12 laboratories, one carpentry shop, and one agro-forest machinery workshop. Besides, it has one experimental farm of 30 hectares for rice, soybean, maize and coffee, and a 1,000-hectare stretch of natural forest with valuable timber and animal species.

The proportion of graduates sprung from various ethnic minorities is still modest but assumes nonetheless an important significance. Their presence in socio-economic life in the three highland provinces has contributed an important part to bringing science and culture to their people. By 1986, of the 892 graduates from the university, 93 were of minority stock.

Now, enrolment stands at 800, including 144 from ethnic minorities. Many of the research projects undertaken at the university have effectively served production and the people's life. The agricultural department has crossbred different varieties of maize, rice and soybean suited for the conditions of Tay Nguyen. The forestry department has achieved initial results in planning the exploitation of khop (a kind of bamboo), whose leaves fall in the dry season and easily provoke forest fires, and in investigating the mineral composition of Tay Nguyen forestland.

The department has signed economic contracts with State farms under which it provides them with millions of saplings and helps them plan forest development. Every year, students of the agricultural and forestry departments go to do practical work in nearly 100 production bases in the highlands.

Medical students go to district health stations to help combat malaria and plague in particular, which used to be rampant in this area for generations. In spite of many difficulties they have completed useful studies on diseases common in Tay Nguyen and have also investigated some cattle diseases.

The University has joined other colleges in carrying out state-level research projects on ground water, the ecology, various plants, and basaltic soil.

In recognition of those achievements recorded in an area which, for long years, was steeped in backwardness and poverty, the SRV Council of State in 1985 awarded to Tay Nguyen University a Labour Order, Third Class.

Teachers and students have been making preparations to celebrate the University's 10th founding anniversary.

During the first ten years of its existence, Tay Nguyen University has indeed become a scientific centre of the Central Highlands.

DUC THANG

# Elephant-racing in the central highlands

From time immemorial, many ethnic groups in the Central Highlands have used tamed elephants for various purposes, transport in particular. The animals have also been part of entertainments held on traditional festivals.

Elephant-racing is a highly interesting and original sport. It stems from labour and is a fine custom.

There are three kinds of elephant-races in the Central Highlands.

First, the beasts are made to compete in pulling timber. An event will involve a dozen sturdy elephants each pulling a heavy tree trunk. On its back sits a mahout with a bamboo or rattan stick in his hand. The race is run over a large open space with many obstacles in the way: hillocks, holes, streams, barriers of tree trunks... The winning beasts are the most robust and nimble ones, which quickly respond to their master's orders.

This contest is generally organized in spring when the weather is dry, the sky blue and the forest backdrop magnificent. Amid wild gong beating and cheering, the elephants rumble toward their goal, raising clouds of dust. The winners are conferred titles of honour, while their mahouts receive awards of bronze or silver articles and pieces of brocade. The event is crowned with a joyful banquet.

The second kind of race is simply a contest of speed run by the elephants, unmounted, over about three hundred metres of track dotted with markers. The elephants are marked with the names of their masters. The mahouts take their beasts to the starting line and start them off at the signal. The sight of those enormous animals running at full speed is an impressive one with stones flying from under their feet, the earth shaking, and the crowds roaring their encouragement. The award-giving ceremony is followed by the same ritual as above.

The third kind of competition is a tug-of-war between elephant and elephant or between elephant and men. A rope, made of lianas twisted together and about ten armspans long, is tied to a collar on the animal's shoulders. Gong beats open the contest. On a large piece of grassland, two elephants pull the rope in opposite directions. The one which manages to pull its opponent over to its side of the marking-line is the winner. An even more exciting contest is that between an elephant and a crowd of people. On one side is a huge elephant; on the other are hundreds of people of all ages and both sexes. Needless to say, the latter have to exert themselves to the utmost, pulling and shouting, sweat trickling down their faces and bodies.

The contest is always arranged in such a way as to end in man's victory. This satisfies the people's pride and brings them together.

DANG LAM SON

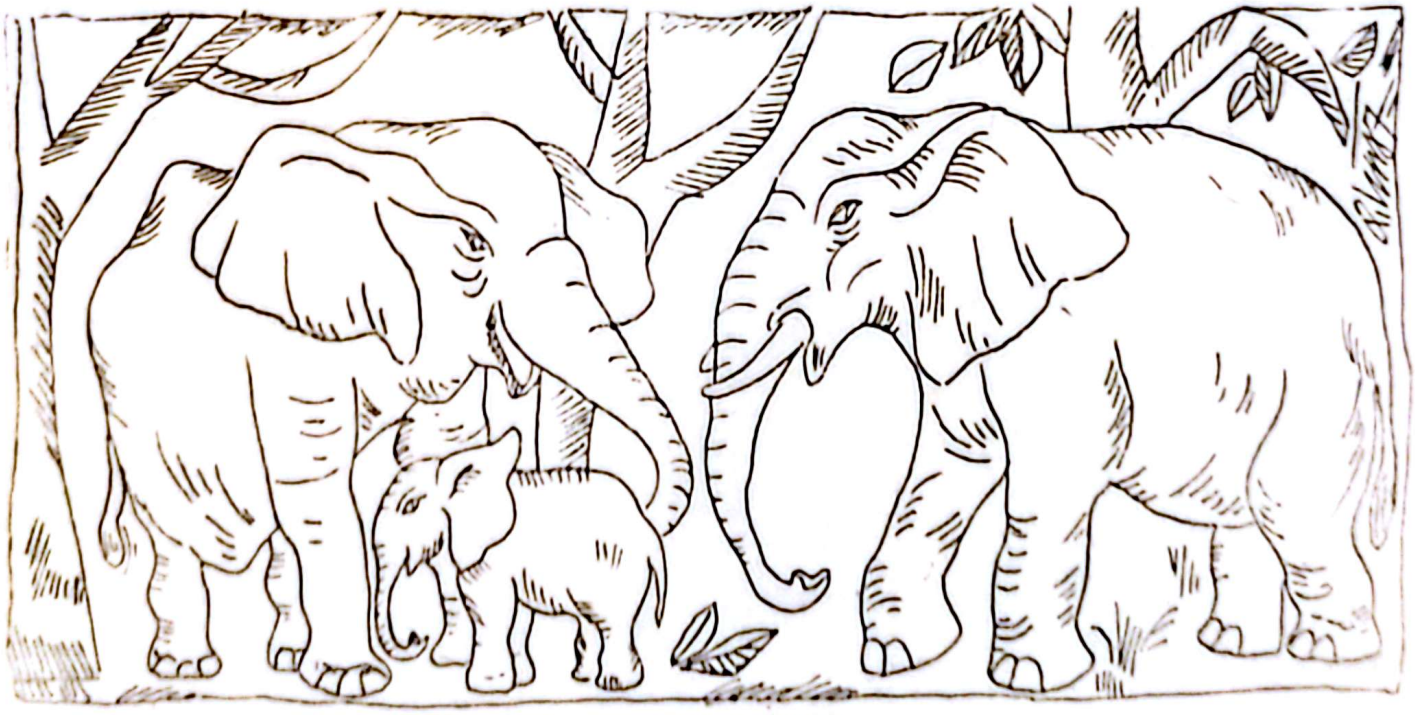
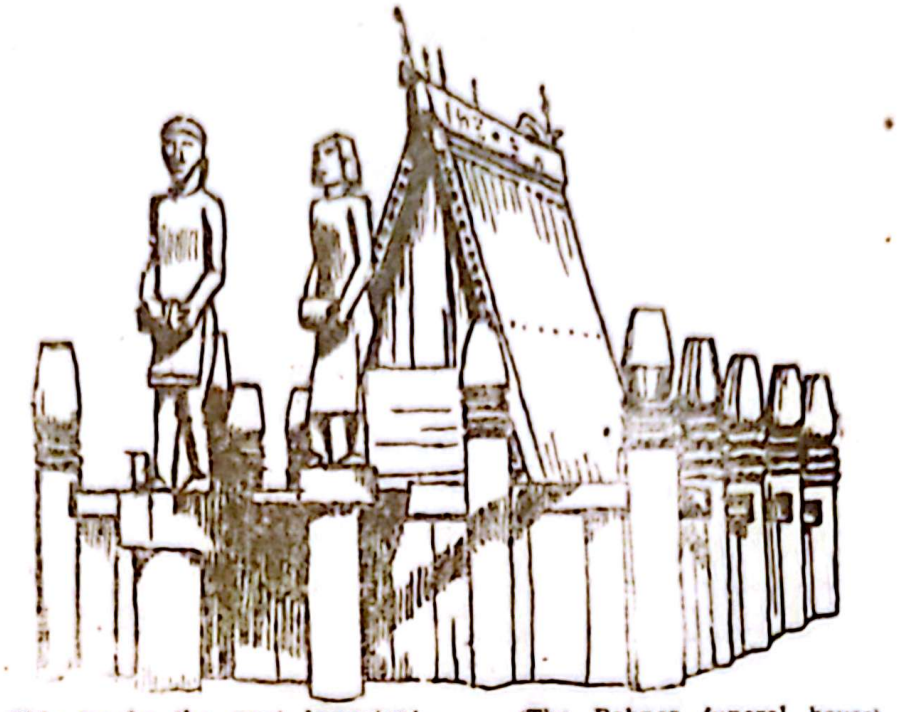


*Illustration by CONG QUOC HA.*

# THE THUONG FUNERAL HOUSE

NGUYEN TU CHI
*Ethnologist*



*This maybe the most important...* (The *Bahnar* funeral house)

Generally speaking one can say that the study of the *Thuong*' funeral house and of plastic symbols relating to it is still in its initial stage. The following remarks, therefore, are not meant to deal with problems — ethnological and aesthetic — concerning them, but are merely observations made in certain villages in northern Tay Nguyen (the Central Highlands) inhabited by the *Bahnar*, whose language is Austro-Asian — or more precisely, Mon-Khmer — and by the *Djarai*, whose language belongs to the Austronesian or Malayo-Polynesian family.

Whether they come from one language family or the other, and whether they live on eastern slopes of the Truong Son or on the Tay Nguyen Plateaux, those human communities, now known by the common designation, differ from one another by certain traits — a distinctive language or dialect, and specific customs. However, despite the many ethnographic characteristics that give each of them an original ethnic physiognomy, the common designation of *Thuong* is justified in that one can clearly discern in their different modes of life a certain common denominator that makes them stand out as a distinctive category different from other ethnic groups in the country. Mention can be made of the most striking aspects:

— Slash-and-burn farming, with use of the dibble;

— Houses built on stilts or, more rarely, laid on the ground but with a raised bamboo floor made of wood or bamboo;

— For garments, loin-cloths for men and short skirts for women; a draping blanket is used by both men and women in cold weather;

— For strong drink, a sort of rice beer — never distilled alcoholic beverage — is sipped up slowly through small flexible bamboo pipes;

— Levirate and sororate;

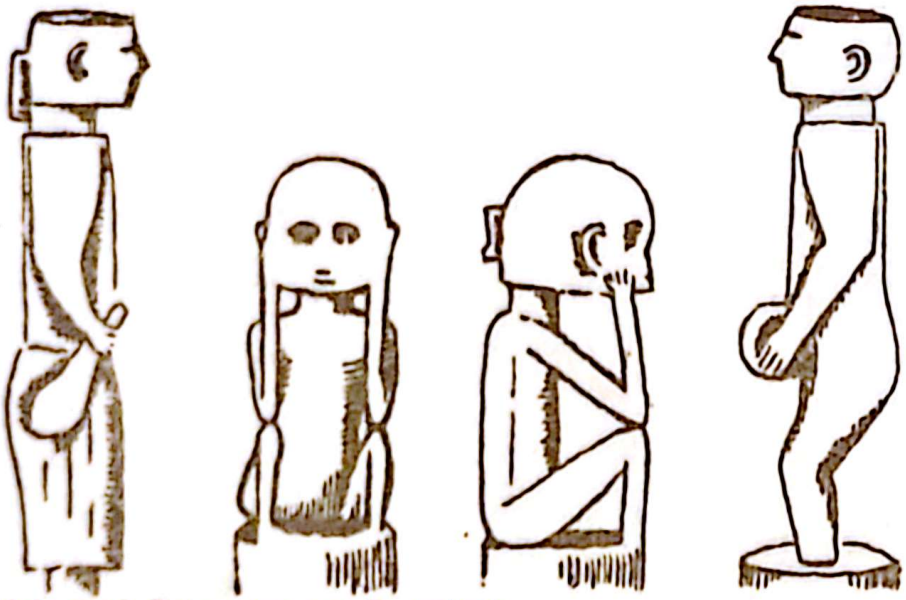
— The grouping of people into independent, or at least autonomous, villages, even in the case of a chieftaincy whose authority embraces a whole region. Each village has its own territory, clearly demarcated, its own customs, and its self-administration;

— Cultivable lands in each village are owned collectively;

— Village elders have a dominant role in making decisions concerning communal activities and collective behaviour;

— The worship of natural elements, idealized as *Yang*, or genies, in more or less rudimentary pantheons. Many groups, if not all, make "buffalo sacrifices.", etc.

One of the most remarkable traits is perhaps the conception of death, which is shared in broad lines by all *Thuong* groups: what happens to the soul after definitive separation from the body; the attitude of the whole collective of the living toward the dead, including the way funerals are conducted.



*Made some forty years ago by artisans.*
(Traditional *Bahnar* funeral statues)

*Illustrations by* TRAN TUY

According to various documents published by French researchers in colonial times and the first results of investigations by Vietnamese ethnologists after the liberation of the southern half of the country in 1975, no *Thuong* group believes in the possibility for the dead to return periodically from the other world to share a meal with the living under the family roof. In other words, contrary to the *Viet*, also called *Kinh*, who form the majority of the country's population, and to certain ethnic minorities in northern Vietnam, the *Thuong* do not practise "ancestors' worship" in the "classical" sense of the term. Indeed, despite details which vary from one ethnic group to another, the whole formal attitude of the living toward a relative who has died recently is governed by a common principle: it is observed only for a more or less brief period and ceases altogether from the moment the dead is believed to leave the world of the living for good. So, on the ritual plane, should it not be more fitting, following the so-called ceremony of "giving up the spirit (of the dead)"[2] to replace the concept of "ancestors' worship" by that of "worship of the recent dead"?

Anyway, during the crucial period before the "giving up of the spirit (of the dead)", which may last about a year, a little more, a little less, according to the customs of each group, the living take great care of the deceased, placing meals on the tomb every day, communicating with the deceased through the medium of various sacrifices and, most important of all, setting up a funeral house to shelter the tomb from inclement weather and the deceased from the evil influence of the hostile spirits. This structure will be replaced, on the eve of the "giving up of the spirit (of the dead)", by a more permanent one, probably for use by the deceased in the other world.

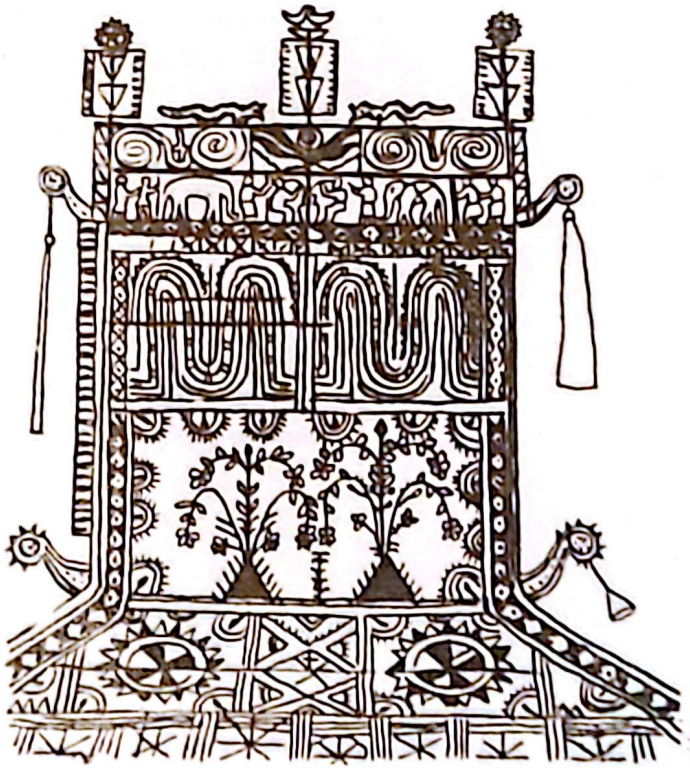
This permanent funeral house, though of modest size, is decorated with many ornaments, some of which certainly relate to the traditional cosmological conception held by each group, and more particularly to the path linking this world to the other. Of all those plastic symbols, the most striking are undoubtedly the wooden statues topping the stakes forming a sacred rectangle around the funeral house. Some of those statues are more or less evocative of African and Melanesian sculpture.

It should be mentioned that during the two long wars of imperialist aggression conducted against Vietnam from 1945 to 1975, several *Thuong* groups were victims of what was termed "ethnocide" by the French ethnologist Georges Condominas, at the hands of foreign occupation armies, and that their funeral sculpture subsequently underwent serious regression. It is imperative, therefore, to save whatever can still be saved from this original artistic and cultural legacy, first by taking pictures of whatever remains, then by collecting objects, which will be examined and interpreted in the light of ethnographical facts gathered on the spot.

Each *Thuong* group has its own kind of funeral house, the largest and most richly decorated being the ones built by the *Bahnar* and the *Djarai* in northern Tay Nguyen. The roof, made of plaited bamboo in most cases, at least among the *Bahnar*, is vertically oriented and seems to soar into the air. While the front and back sides of the *Bahnar* roof are simply decorated with geometric designs, the *Djarai* roof has in addition some "realistic ornaments: two tree figures and a frieze of human or animal forms. The pictorial area is divided into tiers, which suggests an underlying cosmology. A number of questions could be asked. Could it be, for instance, that the two trees on the *Djarai roof* represent the cosmic tree, and that the geometric designs represent the sun, the moon and the stars? What is certain is that the artist, whether he belongs to one group or the other, insists on adding round decorative objects which are either prolonged by ribbons or surrounded by rays arranged in circles, and which are called "suns" by the aborigines.

In the case of the *Bahnar roof*, the two pillars supporting its two ends rise much higher than the ridge, like masts. They, too, are decorated with triangular designs and ornamental objects. These poles, called *klao*, are to the *Bahnar* the very image of the path leading to the upper world, and the decorative objects and designs on them are called either *mat nar*, (sun) or *mat khoi*, (moon). Similar decorations are found on the ridge and on other funeral poles.

In the coffin buried in the ground without a mound on top,



*A cosmological concept.*
(The roof of a *Bahnar* funeral house)

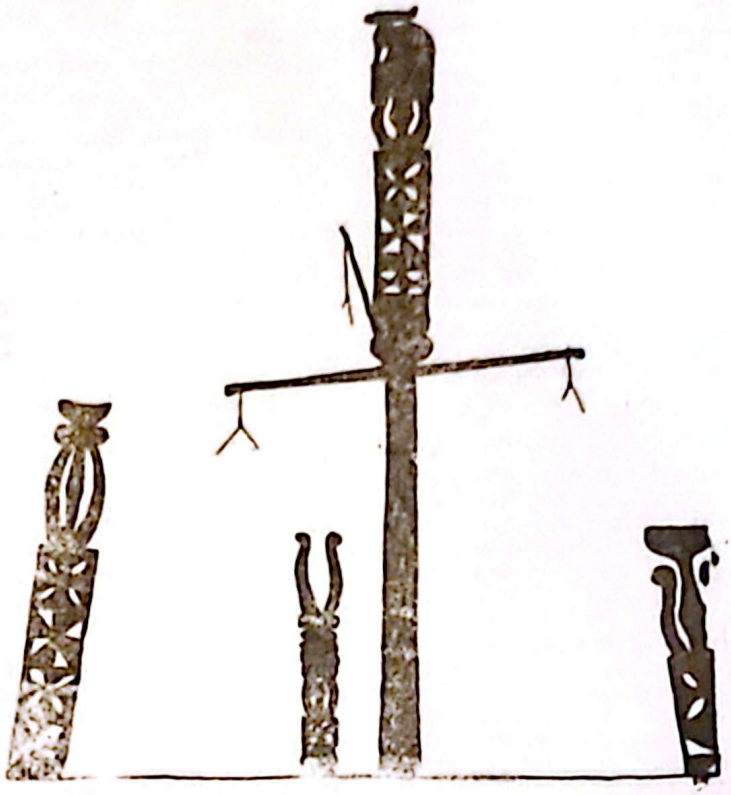
the body is laid on its back along an east-west axis, the head being to the east and the feet to the west with the face turned to the west, the world of darkness. It is the same with the surrounding sacred area which is enclosed, as already mentioned, by funeral statues mounted on the stakes: it is oriented east-west and the entrance is invariably on the east side of the rectangle. On a large-scale, a *Thuong* habitation area invariably consists of the village proper, the zone for the living, and the cemetery, the village of the recent dead. The two zones are often separated by a stream, and the latter is always to the west of the former. A cemetery, however, is only a temporary place. In a *Bahnar* tale, a man, not resigned to the loss of his wife, goes in search of her, travelling westward. His eventful journey finally leads him to *plei kiak*, the true "village of the dead". Thus, the supernatural universe of the *Thuong* is determined not only by a vertical axis which links the earthly world of the living to the heavenly world of the Yang, but also by a horizontal east-west line along which lie two opposite worlds: Life-Death and Light-Darkness.

It is said that a few decades ago, when *Thuong* traditions were still more or less intact, before receiving the repeated blows of "ethnocide", the entrance to a *Djarai* funeral complex used to be guarded by two wooden statues which were not like others. These two, one representing a man, the other a woman, faced each other across the gate, and their genital organs were depicted in their most dynamic state. Now, just imagine one such complex at the precise moment when the sun is rising, when its first rays illuminate the couple caught by the artist at the moment of their purest *elan vital*. Perhaps one must experience such a moment in order to really understand, not by analysis but by direct perception, a central idea which a *Thuong*, regardless of his ethnic background, has about life, funeral houses and funeral rites — the idea that Life and Death, though opposed to each other, do not contradict but rather complement each other, one continuing and being engendered by the other.

Finally, a few words about funeral statues. We have mentioned a regression in the art of making them. As evidence of this, let us make a comparison between those turned out by artisans forty or more years ago (some rare pieces can be seen at the Art Museum in Hanoi) and more recent ones. Rather than commenting at length on them, let us stress two details which used to be present on the former, but are no longer seen on the latter. First, the "heart-shaped face" which certain art historians regard as the hallmark of the traditional sculpture of Black Africa, and second, the vertical development of rhythm imposed by the shape of the log, the material used by *Thuong* sculptors of yesterday and today. That factor, which might be thought to be oppressive, or at least restrictive, has in fact engendered a very suave style. Human figures, hardly emerging from the tree trunks, are, as it were, petrified at the contact of air and light in poses, which may be considered non-signifying in the sense that they do not suggest any precise scenario, do not tell any story. And yet, these plain, roughly cut massses, join one another imperceptibly to form a living whole, animated perhaps by that slight quiver which always runs through the inner fibres of matter.

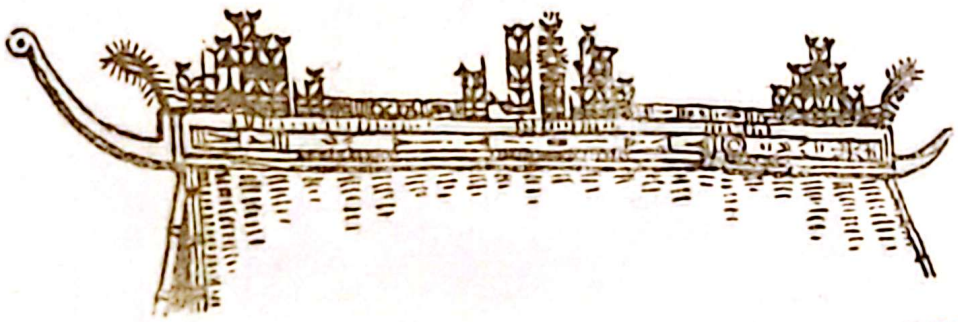
But all that is no more, or very little of it remains. For that reason, one should all the more

(Continued on page 32)



*On the ridge of the roof.*

(of a *Bahnar* funeral house)



*On other funeral masts.*

(In a *Djarai* cemetery).

# NOT A SIMPLE MATTER

On 11 November 1986 the "Tradition and Prestige — 86" prize offered by the review *International Trade* was given to the Vietnam SEAPRODEX Corporation for its high-quality frozen foods such as prawn, cuttlefish, crab, eel, etc., which have gained world wide recognition. If the prize had been granted to products from a developed country, this would have been nothing unusual. But for Vietnam it was quite an event, which has been highlighted by the press.

For developing countries, the quality of their exports has remained a nagging problem due to poor technology and organization. Their products often do not meet the stringent requirements of consumers in developed countries. In Vietnam in particular, due to shortages and lack of experience in international trading, things have been even more difficult.

At home, due to imbalances in the economy, the consumers have to resign themselves to poor-quality, in some instances even counterfeit, goods. This has led not only to waste of raw materials and labour and to chronic shortages but also to the fact that neglect of product quality becomes an ingrained habit in production and trading. For the time being this situation still prevails on the home market throughout the country.

There have also been snags in export: goods have failed to attain the required standards, have proved unsalable or have been returned by the importers. Contracts have been cancelled and foreign markets have closed. Every year serious losses are sustained. Ironically enough, domestic consumers think themselves lucky if they can afford those returned substandard goods.

To produce high-quality export goods has thus become an imperative necessity, which has a bearing on other aspects of the national economy: poor-quality goods that cannot be exported mean failure to import the necessary things, especially raw materials and equipment.

That is the reason why such an apparently simple thing as the gaining of an international prize on product quality has been a notable event for us.

"Frozen prawns of SEAPRODEX have attained the international standard with regard to the required level of bacteria control. They are of excellent quality," such was the observation of a Western company. It had not been a simple matter for SEAPRODEX to win it.

In the years 1976 — 1980 SEAPRODEX used to experience difficulties due to deficient product quality: it had to pay penalties; some of its shipments were refused and some contracts cancelled, etc. The reason was clear. Owing to the lack of ice, cold storage facilities, refrigerating vans and carriages, compounded by slow transportation, some of the prawns went bad. In addition to lack of technical means, antiquated methods of economic management had their share in the bad results. It would take great and allround changes to raise the products up to the required standard.

*Changes in investment:* Using funds from State investment, self-financing and foreign loans, SEAPRODEX has managed to upgrade technical facilities by making advances to the producers. Many ice-making plants have come into being to supply fishermen in the surrounding areas. Besides those large establishments, many villages now have ice-producing facilities of their own. Fishermen's boats are now equipped with insulated holds. The training of skilled workers and well-qualified managerial cadres has also been stepped up.

*New price scales encourage the production of high-quality goods:* For instance each kilo of 1st-class prawn fetches much more money to fisherfolk if the prawns are fresh at the time of delivery.

The new technical and economic measures are applied not only in the procurement of raw products but also in the following links of the chain of production, in which the workers are urged to scrupulously observe all technical steps, without skipping any.

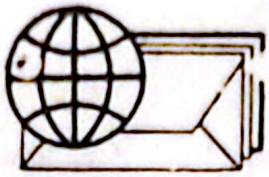
*Expanding the range of exports:* Besides frozen prawn now SEAPRODEX exports other goods: frozen cuttlefish, crab, and eel; dried products such as cuttlefish, prawn, shrimp, seaweeds, swallow nests, etc.; and processed foods such as shrimp fritters, salt, fish sauce, etc. All of them are of export standard.

The experiences of SEAPRODEX prove that, in spite of the difficult conditions we now face, we are fully able to make highquality export goods. Naturally, this will be an arduous endeavour, for the matter is far from simple. We must know how to renovate all the links of production and trading. In other words, as often said in Vietnam today, we must renovate our economic thinking. Foreign trade is considered to be an economic spearhead not only for the time being but also in the long term. The changes in the field of export should be used as a lever to renovate production and trading in the whole of our economy. The day must come when high quality will not only characterize items for export but will be the attribute of all goods on the home market. Only then has a stable foundation been laid for the high quality of our exports. A self-respecting nation will never resign itself to poor-quality goods at home while reserving high-quality commodities for foreign customers.

Obviously, this will be no simple matter. On many occasions in the past, Vietnam has won gold medals at various international fairs. But the situation later deteriorated "gradually," said one newspaper, "the awards we received went down: from gold to silver, from silver to bronze, and then from bronze to nothing."

Anyhow, the recently-won prize by SEAPRODEX has sparked new hope for other exports of Vietnam. What we are looking forward to is that SEAPRODEX will continue to live up to its hard-won prestige.

HUY YEN



*From our Readers*

# NOMENCLATURE OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN VIETNAM

*We have received letters from readers in the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, the People's Republic of Kampuchea, the Bulgarian People's Republic, and also Vietnamese readers in Ho Chi Minh City asking us for systematic information on the fifty-four ethnic groups living on Vietnamese territory. The following data may go some way toward answering their questions.*

VIETNAM COURIER

Implementing Directive No. 83-CD of the Council of Government on the identification of ethnic groups in the whole country, the Committee of Social Sciences and the Central Committee of Nationalities of Vietnam submitted a report to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers on 22 December 1978. Then the General Department of Statistics with the agreement of these Committees issued on 2 March 1979 Decision No. 121-CCTK/PPCD on the "Nomenclature of ethnic groups in Vietnam which was to help conduct the 1979 general census and other statistical and research work.

In this nomenclature the ethnic groups are determined following three criteria: language, material life and culture, ethnic consciousness. At the date of 31 December 1978 they numbered 54, listed in descending order of importance of their populations:

01. Viet (also called Kinh)
02. Tay
03. Thai
04. Hoa
05. Khmer
06. Muong
07. Nung
08. H'mong (Meo)
09. Zao
10. Jarai
11. Ngai
12. Ede
13. Bahnar
14. Sedang
15. San Chay (Cao Lan-San Chi)
16. Kohor
17. Cham
18. San Ziu
19. Hre
20. Mnong
21. Raglai
22. Stieng
23. Bo Ru-Van Kieu
24. Tho
25. Giay
26. Ka Tu
27. Jehtrieng
28. Ma
29. Kho Mu
30. Co
31. Ta Oi
32. Cho Ro
33. Khang
34. Xinh Mun
35. Ha Nhi
36. Chu Ru
37. Lao
38. La Chi
39. La Ha
40. Phu La
41. La Hu
42. Lu
43. Lo Lo
44. Chut
45. Mang
46. Pa Then
47. Co Lao
48. Cong
49. Bo Y
50. Si La
51. Pu Peo
52. Brau
53. O Du
54. Roman

This nomenclature does not include foreign residents.

Ethnic groups with their names and areas of settlement:

| Code | Name | Other names | Major areas of settlement (Provinces, except for Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01 | Viet | Kinh. | In the whole country. |
| 02 | Tay | Tho, Ngan, Phen, Thu Lao, Pa Zi. | Cao Bang, Lang Son, Ha Tuyen, Bac Thai, Hoang Lien Son, Quang Ninh, Ha Bac and Lam Dong. |

| Code | Name | Other names | Major areas of settlement (Provinces, except for Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 03 | Thai | Tay, Tay Khao (White Thai), Tay Dam (Black Thai), Tay Muoi, Tay Thanh (Man Thanh), Hang Tong (Tay Muong), Pu Thay, Tho Da Bac. | Son La, Nghe Tinh, Thanh Hoa, Lai Chau, Hoang Lien Son, Ha Son Binh and Lam Dong. |
| 04 | Hoa (Han) | Chiuzhou, Fujian, Guangdong Hainan, Ha, Xa Phang. | Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Hau Giang, Dong Nai, Minh Hai, Kien Giang, Hai Phong, and Cuu Long. |
| 05 | Khmer | Cur, Cul, Cu, Tho, Vietnamese of Khmer descent Khmer Krom. | Hau Giang, Cuu Long, Kien Giang, Minh Hai, Ho Chi Minh City, Song Be, and Tay Ninh. |
| 06 | Muong | Mol, Mual, Moi[1], Moi Bi, Ao Ta (Au Ta). | Ha Son Binh, Thanh Hoa, Vinh Phu, Hoang Lien Son, Son La, and Ha Nam Ninh. |
| 07 | Nung | Xuong, Giang Nung An, Phan Sinh, Nung Chao, Loi, Quy Rin, Khen Lai... | Cao Bang, Lang Son, Bac Thai, Ha Tuyen, Ha Bac, Hoang Lien Son, Quang Ninh, Lam Dong and Ho Chi Minh City. |
| 08 | Hmong (Meo) | Meo, Motley Meo, Green Meo, Red Meo, Black Meo, Na Mieo, White Man. | Ha Tuyen, Hoang Lien Son, Lai Chau, Son La, Cao Bang, Lang Son and Nghe Tinh. |
| 09 | Zao | Man, Dong, Trai, Xa, Ziu, Mien, Zao with white trousers, Red Zao, Zao with tight trousers, Lo Giang, Zao Tien, Thanh Y, Lan Ten, Dai Ban, Tieu Ban, Coc Ngang, Coc Mun, Son Dau... | Ha Tuyen, Hoang Lien Son, Cao Bang, Lang Son, Bac Thai, Lai Chau, Son La, Ha Son Binh, Vinh Phu, Ha Bac, Thanh Hoa and Quang Ninh. |
| 10 | Jarai | Gioral, Choral, Tobuan, Hobau, Hdrung, Chor. | Gia Lai — Kon Tum. |
| 11 | Ngai | Xin, Le, Dan. Khanh Gia. | Quang Ninh, Cao Bang and Lang Son. |
| 12 | Ede | Rahde, De, Kpa, Adham, Krung, Ktul, Dlie Rue, Blo Epan, Mihur[2], Bih. | Dac Lac and Phu Khanh. |
| 13 | Bahnar | Go Lar, To Lo, Gho Long (Y Lang), Ro Ngao, Kren, Roh, Kon, Kde, A La Kong, Kpang Kong, Bo Man. | Gia Lai — Kon Tum, Nghia Binh and Phu Khanh. |
| 14 | Sedang | Xo Teng, Hdang, To Trah, Mo Nam, Ha Lang, Ka Dong, Kmrang, Con Lan, Bri La, Tang. | Gia Lai — Kon Tum and Quang Nam — Da Nang. |
| 15 | San Chay (Cao Lan — San Chi) | Cao Lan, Man Cao Lan, Hon Ban, San Chi (also called Son Tu and excluding the groups San Chi at Bao Lac and Cho Ra). | Bac Thai, Quang Ninh, Ha Bac, Cao Bang, Lang Son and Ha Tuyen. |
| 16 | Kohor | Sre, Nop, (Tu Lop), Co Don, Chil[3], Lat (Lach), Trinh. | Lam Dong and Thuan Hai. |
| 17 | Cham | Chiem Thanh, Hroi. | Thuan Hai, An Giang, Ho Chi Minh City, Nghia Binh and Phu Khanh. |

| Code | Name | Other names | Major areas of settlement (Provinces, except for Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | San Ziu | San Zeo, Trai Dat, Man with short trousers. | Bac Thai, Vinh Phu, Ha Bac, Quang Ninh and Ha Tuyen. |
| 19 | Hre | Cham Re, Chom, Kre, Luy. | Nghia Binh. |
| 20 | Muong | Pnong, Nong, Pre, Bu Zang, Di Pri, Biat, Gar, Ro Lam, Chil[3]. | Dac Lac, Lam Dong and Song Be. |
| 21 | Raglai | Ra Clay, Rai, Noang, La Oang. | Thuan Hai, and Phu Khanh. |
| 22 | Stieng | Xa Dieng. | Song Be, and Tay Ninh. |
| 23 | Bo Ru Van Kieu | Bo Ru, Van Kiều, Mang Cong, Tri Khua. | Binh Tri Thien. |
| 24 | Tho (4) | Keo, Mon, Cuoi, Ho, Dan, Lai Ly Ha, Tay Pong, Con Kha, Xa La Vang[5]. | Nghe Tinh and Thanh Hoa. |
| 25 | Giay | Nhang, Zang, Lau Thin Pu, Ma Cui, Chu[6], Xa | Hoang Lien Son, Ha Tuyen, and Lai Chau. |
| 26 | Ko Tu | Ka Tu, Cao, Ha, Phuong, Ka Tang[7]. | Quang Nam — Da Nang and Gia Lai — Kon Tum. |
| 27 | Jeh-trieng | Dgieh, Tareh, Giang Ray, Pin, Trieng, Treng, Ta Rieng, Ve (Veh) La Ve, Ka Tang[7]. | Quang Nam — Da Nang, and Gia Lai — Kon Tum. |
| 28 | Ma | Chau Ma, Ma Ngan, Ma Xop, Ma To, Ma Krung. | Lam Dong and Dong Nai. |
| 29 | Kho Mu | Xe Cau, Mun Xen, Pu Thenh, Tenh, Tay Hay. | Nghe Tinh, Son La, Lai Chau and Hoang Lien Son. |
| 30 | Co | Cor, Col, Cua, Trau. | Nghia Binh, and Quang Nam — Da Nang. |
| 31 | Ta Oi | Toi Oi, Pa Co, Pa Hi, (Ba Hi). | Binh Tri Thien. |
| 32 | Cho Ro | Zo Ro, Chau Ro. | Dong Nai. |
| 33 | Khang | Xa Khao, Xa Sua, Xa Zon, Xa Zang, Xa Hoc, Xa Ai, Xa Bung, Quang Lam. | Lai Chau, and Son La. |
| 34 | Xing Mun | Puoc, Pua. | Son La, and Lai Chau. |
| 35 | Ha Nhi | U Ni, Xa U Ni. | Lai Chau, and Hoang Lien Son. |
| 36 | Cho Ru | Cho Ru, Chu | Lam Dong, and Thuan Hai. |
| 37 | Lao | Lao Boc, Lao Noi. | Lai Chau, Son La, Thanh Hoa and Hoang Lien Son. |
| 38 | La Chi | Cui Te, La Qua. | Ha Tuyen |
| 39 | La Ha | Xa Khao, Khla Phlao. | Lai Chau and Son La. |

| Code | Name | Other names | Major areas of settlement (Provinces, except for Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 40 | Phu La | Bo Kho Pa, Mu Zi Pa, Xa Pho, Pho, Va Xo Lao, Pu Zang. | Hoang Lien Son and Lai Chau |
| 41 | La Hu | Khu Xung, Co Xung, Kha Quy. | Lai Chau |
| 42 | Lu | Lu, Nhuon (Zuon). | Lai Chau |
| 43 | Lo Lo | Mun Zi. | Cao Lan, Lang Son and Ha Tuyen. |
| 44 | Chut | Sach, May, Ruc, Ma Lieng, A Rem, Tu Vang, Pa Leng, Xo Lang, To Hung Cha Cu, Tac Cui, U Mo, Xa La Vang[5]. | Binh Tri Thien. |
| 45 | Mang | Mang U, Xa La Vang (with yellow-leaves). | Lai Chau |
| 46 | Pa Then | Pa Hung, Tong. | Ha Tuyen |
| 47 | Co Lao | | Ha Tuyen |
| 48 | Cong | Xan Khong, Mong Nhe, Xa Xeng. | Lai Chau |
| 49 | Bo Y | Chung Cha, Trong Gia, Tu Zi, Tu Zin. | Hoang Lien Son and Ha Tuyen. |
| 50 | Si La | Cu De Xu, Kha Pe. | Lai Chau |
| 51 | Pu Peo | Ka Beo, Pen Ti, Lo Lo. | Ha Tuyen |
| 52 | Brau | Brao. | Gia Lai — Kon Tum. |
| 53 | O Du | Tay Hat. | Nghe Tinh. |
| 54 | Romam | | Gia Lai — Kon Tum. |

*1. Name given to the* Muong *by the* Thai.

*2. The Mdhur constitute an intermediary group between the* Ede *and the* Jarai. *Some* Mdhur *villages of Cheo Reo (Gia Lai — Kon Tum province) located close to* Jarai *villages call themselves* Jarai.

*3.* Chil *is a local group of the* Mnong. *Many* Chil *who have gone south to settle among the* Kohor *now call themselves Kohor. The others who have settled near the* Mnong *still consider themselves Mnong.*

*4.* Tho *is the name given by the group to itself. Not to be confused with* Tho *which formerly designated the Tay in Viet Bac, the* Thai *in Da Bac and the* Khmer *in the* Mekong *delta.*

*5.* Xa La Vang *is the name given to various nomadic groups in border areas.*

*6. A part of the* Cui Chu *(Quy Chau) live in Bao Lac (Cao Bang province) among the* Nung *and are listed as* Nung.

*7.* Ca Tang *is a common name for several groups living in the highlands of Quang Nam — Da Nang on the border with Laos. To be differentiated from the name of each specific group.*

## ETHNIC GROUPS IN VIETNAM

### (according to their languages and population sizes)

AUSTRO — ASIATIC FAMILY

*a) Viet — Muong languages*

1. Viet, 2. Muong, 3. Tho, 4. Chut.

*b) Mon-Khmer languages:*

5. Khmer, 6. Bahnar, 7. Sedang, 8. Kohor, 9. Hre, 10. Mnong, 11. Stieng, 12. Bo Ru — Van Kieu, 13. Ko Tu, 14. Jehtrieng, 15. Ma, 16. Kho Mu, 17. Co, 18. Ta Oi, 19. Cho Ro, 20. Hang, 21. Xing Mun, 22. Mang, 23. Brau, 24. O Du, 25. Roman.

*c) Tay — Thai languages:*

26. Tay, 27. Thai, 28. Nung, 29. San Chay (Cao Lan — San Chi), 30. Giay, 31. Lao, 32. Lu, 33. Bo Y;

*d) Meo — Zao languages:*

34. Hmong (Meo), 35. Zao, 36. Pa. Then;

*e) Other languages:*

37. La Chi, 38. La Ha, 39. Co Lao, 40. Pu Peo;

MALAYO — POLYNESIAN FAMILY

41. Jarai, 42. Ede, 43. Cham, 44. Raglai, 45. Cho Ru;

SINO — TIBETAN FAMILY

*a) Han language:*

46. Hoa (Han), 47. Ngai, 48. San Ziu;

*b) Tibeto — Burmese languages:*

49. Ha Nhi, 50. La Hu, 51. Phu La, 52. Lo Lo, 53. Cong, 54. Si La.

# CHRONOLOGY . CHRONOLOGY

**(15 March — 14 April)**

## MARCH

17 — 23 : A delegation of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, headed by G. A. P. Biryukova, Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, visits Vietnam.

18 — 26 : *Nghia Binh* : Holding of the 1987 National Boxing Tournament with the participation of 81 boxers from eight provinces and cities. The Hanoi team wins six gold, three silver and six bronze medals. The Nghia Binh team ranks second with 4 golds, 7 silvers and 7 bronzes.

19. Swedish Minister of Cooperation for Development Lena Hjeim Wallen ends her official visit to Vietnam begun on 13 March 1987.

M. Jean Pierre Puissochet, State Councillor, Director of the French International Institute of Administration, ends his visit to Vietnam begun on 14 March 1987.

19 — 26 : A delegation of the Hungarian government's Religious Department, headed by Minister of State Imre Miklos, Head of the Department, pays a friendship visit to Vietnam.

20. Chairman of the SRV Council of Ministers Pham Van Dong sends a message of congratulation to UN Secretary General Javier Perez De Cuellar, and Chairman of the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid G. N. Garba on the occasion of the International Day for the Abilition of Racial Discrimination (21 March).

24 — 25 : Kibria, Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and special representative of the UN Secretary General in charge of Humanitarian Aid to Kampuchea, visits Vietnam.

25. *Hanoi* : Holding of a regular session of the Council of State

— to take decisions on matters relating to the work of the People's Supreme Court.

— to appoint members of the People's Supreme Office of Public Prosecution, and judges of the People's Supreme Court and Military Courts at various levels.

27 *March — 3 April* : A high-level delegation of the Indian Army, headed by General K. Sundarj, Chief-of-Staff of the Indian Army, pays an official, Friendship visit to Vietnam.

31 *Hanoi* : In preparation for the elections to the Eighth National Assembly, and to People's Council at various levels, to be held on 19 April 1987, the Central Election Council holds its Second plenary meeting under the chairmanship of President Truong-Chinh to hear the report on the selection following popular consultations, and the nomination of candidates; on publicity work for the elections; on the results of inspection of the preparations; and on the settlement of voters' claims. The Council continues to send delegations to supervise preparations for the elections in various localities.

## April

1 — 9 *Hanoi*. Holding of the second session of the CPVCC to discuss and decide on a series of policies and measures concerning prices, circulation of materials, equipment and commodities, wages and the living conditions of workers, civil servants and members of the armed forces, on budgetary outlays and revenues, finances, banking (Details of this important resolution will be published in our coming next issue, No. 7-1987).

3. The UN confers the International Peace Year Memorial Order on Phan Anh Chairman of the Vietnam Committee for the International Peace Year.

4 — 5. A high-ranking Angolan Party and State delegation, headed by Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, Chairman of Angola's MPLA — Workers' Party, President of the People's Republic of Angola, and Chairman of the Angolan National Assembly pays an official friendship visit to VN (See article on page 10).

6. Hanoi : Chairman of the Council of Ministers Pham Van Dong, cordially receives Francois Missoffe, advisor to French Prime Minister Chirac.

7 — 11. A Cuban Foreign Ministry delegation, headed by Vice-Minister Giraldo Mazola, visits Vietnam.

8 — 12. *Hanoi* : Holding of the 1987 National Free Wrestling Tournament with the participation of over 100 wrestlers of various categories 48, 52, 57, 62, 68 and 74 kilogrammes.

11. King Duy Tan's eldest son and other members of his family accompany the late king's remains back to Hue, the ancient imperial capital, to be interred there. Duy Tan was a patriotic king who resisted French colonialism. For that reason he was deposed by the French administration and deported to Reunion island. The family was received by Chairman Pham Van Dong.

14. The SRV Council of State confers the Gold Star Order on Kim Il Sung, General Secretary of the Korean Labour Party Central Committee, and President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, for his great contributions to the consolidation and strengthening of the solidarity, friendship, and fraternal cooperation between Korea and Vietnam, on the occasion of his 75th birth day.

— The Vietnam Peace Committee sends a message to American scientist Prof. Doctor Charles Hyder to express the emotion and high appreciation of the Vietnamese people and peace fighters before his courageous action in the interest of mankind.

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**THE THUONG...**

*(Continued from page 26)*

appreciate any assistance, however modest, to this salvage work which concerns us all.

*1. Thuong, literally mountaineers, is the name given by the Vietnamese living in the plains to the inhabitants of the Central Highlands and those of the Truong Son (Long Range), formerly called "Chain annamitique" by French geographers.*

*2. In* Djarai : *pthi atâu (literally : giving up the spirit (of the dead). According to the general conception of the* Thuong, *a living man has several souls "three for instance, according to certain Bahnar groups). But after death, souls are no longer spoken of : from the living man, there are only material remains to be buried as soon as possible, and a personality, total but invisible, that the Djarai call atâu (and that we are trying to translate by : spirit of the dead).*

# TAY NGUYEN (THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS) AT PRESENT

● *Sword dance, (Djarai ethnic minority)*

*Photo:* SY HUYNH

● *Early morning on lake Lac, Dac Lac province.*

*Photo:* NGUYEN THU

● *A rubber plantation in Dac Lac province.*

*Photo:* DINH NA

Art photographer PHAM TUE, 55, started his career nearly 40 years ago. A member of the Vietnam Association of Art Photographers, he has taken many original pictures of landscapes and people in Vietnam.

● *Gong playing in the Central Highlands.*

● *Searching for mineral ores.*

● *The road to Dong Van.*

● *Bo Nau grotto, Ha Long Bay.*